

MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

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THE DANGER IN FRANCE AND BELGIUM.

It was well observed by Burke that the generality of people are fifty years at least behindhand in their politics. "Men are wise," he said, "but with little reflection, and good with little self-denial, in the business of all times except their own." It is often indeed of the most recent events that men are most profoundly ignorant. They either do not see these events at all, or if they do see them, it is very imperfectly and in a wrong perspective; the facts are distorted by prejudice and passion; their true significance is missed, and can only be perceived in future years when the controversial fires have cooled, and time and the historian have cleared away the smoke. Many a man has a more accurate knowledge of the England of the Commonwealth or the Conquest than of the England of his own day, and of the France of the Napoleonic era than the France of the third Republic. It may then be neither uninteresting nor uninformative to glance for a moment at the two countries, France and Belgium, which are most adjacent to us, whose affairs have much influence on ourselves, and which have between them very close affinities in geographical position, language, manners, and traditions.

It is one of the highest problems of statesmanship to insure that the ruling classes should be those whose interest

coincides with that of the community at large, and who at the same time possess the knowledge and wisdom without which mere good intentions would be vain. Interest gives the motive to seek a just rule and a good administration, and knowledge the power to erect and support them. In the earlier ages of the history of the world the greatest weight was attached to years, experience, and wisdom as the qualifications for those who aspired to be rulers of men. Age was the crown of manhood to which reverence was instinctively accorded, and the old were deemed the oracles of wisdom. Of such sort formerly were the shepherds of the people. Then it was afterwards discovered that knowledge alone was no guarantee against the abuses of untrammelled power, that the wielders of authority frequently perverted it to their own self-interested ends, and that if they did not govern badly by mistake they sometimes did so by design. It is to the consummate skill and intensity of conviction with which this position was argued and maintained by the French philosophers of the eighteenth century, and by Bentham and his school, that the growth of modern democracy must mainly be ascribed. Much of what they said was unquestionably true; but they saw only one side of the

question, though they saw it with a penetrating glance; and in consequence it has come to be a widely spread belief that interest without knowledge is a sufficient guarantee for efficiency of rule, and that to insure good government it needs only to be wished for. Ripe wisdom and mature experience are thus held in less account; youth with its sensitive receptiveness, its eager enthusiasms, and its generous ardour not yet dulled by disillusion, is a pleasanter, if not a better, counsellor than age; it hopes more and is more ready to rush into experiments. We of modern times, when so many new movements are in vogue, are somewhat like belated Rehoboams who scorned his old advisers, and summoned the young to his counsel. It will be well for us if we do not meet with similar misfortunes.

The rule of the many seems now to be regarded as the final and inevitable form of government for all the civilised communities of men; that is held for a fact, which may either be eagerly embraced or sullenly accepted. The few, it is said, misgoverned, because it was their interest to do so; but the many will govern well, because it will be their obvious gain. That briefly is the democratic creed; and it would be a good one if the mass of men had the foresight to know their true interests in life, and the wisdom to find the means likely to attain them. But as many of the people too often close their eyes to the one and are ignorant of the other, democracy is in truth a very great experiment. It is nothing less than self-government by those who necessarily have little notion how to govern. That, disguise it as we may, is the great central fact, the master idea of the modern world.

Let us consider first the case of France. There the suffrage is practically universal, being the possession of every man who has attained the age

of twenty-one and has resided for at least six months in his commune, the exceptions only being soldiers serving with the flag and those disqualified by crime. The last general election took place in 1893, and its results, and the events which have subsequently happened, are of the greatest interest and importance. In the first place, the great fact of the election of 1893 was the enormous increase of the Republican Deputies and the complete rout of the Reactionary parties. For whereas the Republicans of all shades gained one hundred and eight seats, the Monarchists and Boulangists lost one hundred and one, the discrepancy of these figures being accounted for by the fact that since the previous election the number of Deputies had been increased by seven. So that in a House of five hundred and eighty-two members, if we put aside the sixteen representatives of Algeria and the colonies, we find that no less than four hundred and ninety Deputies are Republicans and only seventy-six Reactionaries. This result is unquestionably due to the action of the Pope in directing the Royalists to acknowledge the Republic; and it is the "Rallied Right" who have so largely recruited the Republican ranks. It must be at once admitted that from this point of view the result of the elections was highly satisfactory. If M. Thiers was right when he declared that a Republic was the form of government which divided Frenchmen least, there should now be a prospect that the fundamental differences which have so often torn her citizens asunder will soon be blotted out. That is well; but with this it is to be feared that all sense of satisfaction ends. The following table shows the number of Deputies of the various Republican parties returned, and the number of seats which each of them respectively have gained.

Moderate Republicans, 279 seats, showing a gain of 17.

Radical Socialists, 10 seats, showing a gain of 7.

Radicals, 143 seats, showing a gain of 48.

Socialists, 31 " " " 14.

Rallied, 27 " " " 22.

It will be seen from these figures that the Radicals and Socialists have increased in strength in a much greater degree than the Moderate Republicans. It is the former and not the latter who have gained most by the desertions from the Royalist ranks; and such gains as the Moderates had were almost counterbalanced by defections from themselves to the Radical wing. The significance of this fact will be rendered more apparent by a somewhat closer examination of the voting. Of the votes given for the Republicans rather more than half were polled by the Radical and Socialist candidates. Of these two parties the Radicals polled decidedly the most; but then in proportion to the number of votes cast for them they were much the most successful; for while about eighty per cent. of their supporters in the country are represented in the Chamber, only about thirty-three per cent. of the Socialists and about twenty-two per cent. of the Radical Socialists are equally successful. It has been calculated that on a strictly proportional representative system the Moderates have gained twenty-four more seats than they are entitled to, and the Radicals eighteen more; whereas the Socialists should have increased their representatives by sixteen, and the Radical Socialists by two. It is at once therefore apparent that the Socialist element in the Chamber is a most inadequate representation of that party in the country. Now that is a fact the gravity of which it would be hard to overestimate. It is true indeed that the greater part of the Socialist votes were cast in the great towns of Paris,

Lyons, Lille, and Marseilles; but to any one who considers the preponderating influence which the great towns, and particularly Paris, have in France, this will hardly appear an ameliorating fact. It seems impossible to mistake the drift of democracy in France; it is showing daily less sobriety of thought, less temperance in speech and action, and an ever-increasing tendency to leave the ordered paths of prudence for rash and revolutionary courses. To profess one's self a Socialist is to acknowledge a desire to see the existing framework of society completely overturned; and whether the Socialist voters quite appreciate the meaning of their creed, or only act in sheer ignorance and folly, the danger to the State is the same. There were moreover features about the last election suggestive not merely of a spirit of indifference in the people but also of a misplaced frivolity which is really ominous. Too much must not be made of the number of abstentions, because they are numerous everywhere; but it is worthy of remark that they amount to about thirty per cent. of the number of electors on the register, being a considerable increase on those of the previous election in 1889. That in itself is a fact which merely shows how little the franchise is esteemed in the land where the natural rights of man have been the most violently insisted on; but the absurd number of the candidates who in many districts sought the suffrages, and all of whom must presumably have received a certain number of votes, is significant. In England the number of candidates for a single seat rarely exceeds three, and is not often that; in France the constituencies in which more than four candidates appeared were numerous; in one constituency there were actually eleven. In the Department of the Seine there were three hundred

and thirty-three candidates for forty-six seats, and in that of the Bouches-du-Rhône there were seventy-four candidates for eight seats. No one will be surprised to hear that the abstentions were most numerous in those districts where the number of candidates was largest. What a world of light-hearted frivolity does this state of things reveal! By many of the candidates and of the voters alike the franchise must have been regarded not as a trust to be sedulously cherished and guarded, but as an idle plaything to be lightly handled and capriciously misused. - When so many are indifferent, it cannot be a matter of surprise that the Socialists, who, to do them justice, are grimly earnest, are advancing steadily to their goal. It was Burke's opinion that a perfect democracy is "the most shameless thing in the world"; in those districts where an election seems to be regarded as a joke, there at least it may be said that democracy shows but little sense of shame.

It will be obvious then from these facts that the drift of French democratic feeling has set, at least for the present, in favour of the parties professing extreme opinions, and it is only natural to expect some corresponding results in the conduct of affairs. We shall find them most clearly marked in the Chamber of Deputies. As the Radicals and Socialists feel their strength increasing, they naturally grow more aggressive, and their differences with the Moderates more acute. The formation of Ministries on the principle, admirable in itself, of Republican Concentration, is daily becoming more difficult; the less stubborn of the Moderates incline towards the side which they think is growing in favour with the people; and so the Chamber as a whole is slightly in advance of the opinion of the country, while Minis-

tries are reduced to a condition of curious instability. A Ministry of Radicals, as it would not command a majority, would be an impossible creation; while one of Moderates alone, or of Moderates tempered by a Radical admixture, can only live from hand to mouth, feeling never sure that a number of weak-kneed Opportunists will not combine with the extreme Left to turn them out. That the present is the ninth Ministry within six years is a fact which needs no comment. All this tends of course to deteriorate the class of men from which Ministries are recruited. The stuff of which good Ministers are made is never in any country very common, but in France events have reduced it sadly. Where no one can count on stability of office, and there is nothing to be gained but loss of reputation, the best men hold back. Corruption, too, the peculiar vice of parliamentary institutions, has cut very deep in France; and many who have held office, being rightly or wrongly suspected of the taint, have become impossible candidates for ministerial place. Nowhere else are public men used up at such a fearful pace, or does democracy devour so many of her children. It is obvious that such a state of things must be a source of very serious danger even to such a country as France, with her marvellous recuperative force, and vast resources of men of shining talents and eminent abilities.

It is much to be wished that the evil ended here, and that the Presidency of the Republic, remaining unaffected by the current of events, had afforded a nucleus of resistance to the revolutionary forces. But it is evident that, since M. Grévy retired from the Elysée, the position of the President has become more and more unstable. He himself was compromised by scandals, his ignorance

of which, if ignorance it was, was the measure of his impotence; and he was practically driven from office by the Chamber. M. Carnot fell by the knife of the assassin, and all the world knows how M. Casimir-Périer retired. No doubt the French President occupies a peculiar position. It has been said that whereas a constitutional monarch reigns but does not govern, and the American President governs but does not reign, the French President does neither. There is a story of a court jester who climbed into the throne, and holding the ball in one hand and the sceptre in the other, declared that he was "reigning." The French President is in much the same position, with the difference that he has not got the ball and sceptre to console him. He is reduced to a course of strenuous inactivity, which would certainly be trying to a man of energy and power. But even that does not account for the late President's retirement, an event not so much disastrous in itself as suggestive of ominous and unsuspected forces. The inner history of the events which led to his retirement is not yet wholly known, but of this we may be sure, that M. Casimir-Périer, who was elected as a man of well-known strength and resolution, did not suddenly become as weak as water. *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus*. Something must have happened to render his position one in which he could no longer usefully continue; and from what we know we may infer that it was something arising from the gathering forces of disorder. We know that his constituents, when he accepted the Presidency, elected in his place a Radical of a revolutionary type, and that an *arrondissement* of Paris elected as its Deputy a man who, besides being a Socialist, owned a scurrilous print, and was sent to prison for grossly libelling the President; we know, too, that when the Socialists in the Cham-

ber moved for his release in order that he might be allowed to take his seat, a number of Deputies voted in favour of the proposal. Such was the measure of support that the President could look for in the Chamber. It is said that Ministers refused to submit some important documents of State for his perusal, and entered on important acts of policy without his knowledge or concurrence. If that be true, it must have been owing to the pressure of the Radicals and Socialists who seem bent on making the Chamber override every other authority in the State, and on making for themselves a position of ultimate supremacy and the last resort of power. They pose as the sole and sacred guardians of universal suffrage, a phrase which they almost worship as a fetish. The events which immediately preceded M. Casimir-Périer's retirement afforded the world a sample of their spirit. It seems that a question had arisen over a guarantee given by the State to the bonds of a certain railway-company, and the Council of State, the highest judicial authority in the land, before whom the question came, decided in favour of the company. The Socialists, who were suspicious of a job, demanded that Ministers should over-ride the decision of the Council, and actually succeeded in getting a majority in the Chamber for their proposal. That is much as if the House of Commons should insist on the Government overruling a decision of the House of Lords sitting as the ultimate Court of Appeal. The French Chamber in fact arrogated to itself the highest functions of the State, and in effect decided that its will was law. That, and nothing else, was what the majority of Deputies who carried the proposal meant. A more monstrous abuse of parliamentary authority was probably never witnessed; it is no wonder that the whole of France stood

aghast, and that the Ministers flung down their portfolios in horror. This event probably precipitated M. Casimir-Périer's retirement, and the Socialists recognised in that a personal triumph for themselves, of which they did not fail to make the most. It is true that the Extremists did not succeed in carrying their own candidate for the Presidency, but even in the election of M. Faure there was a sop thrown to Radical opinion. Louis Philippe, with a retrospective glance at his earlier life, and with an almost pathetic presage of the future, once remarked that it was good for France to have a king who had blacked his own boots. The career of M. Faure has been one of which any man might be proud; but it is none the less the case that the qualifications for the Presidency are being reduced to these, to have once worked with one's hands and to have a pleasant manner. The crowning glory of the Socialists was, however, accorded by M. Faure himself when he amnestied the various political offenders, thereby enabling M. Rochefort to celebrate his return by a characteristic display of his quality. By a curious coincidence he arrived in Paris on the day when the mortal remains of Canrobert, the last of the Marshals of France, were carried to their rest. It might have been expected that the voice of faction would have been silent over the grave of one who, whatever his mistakes, was a brave soldier and had added glory to the name of France. But the Socialists angrily dissented from the national honours paid by a grateful country to the illustrious dead, and M. Rochefort of course outdid all his rivals in this unseemly business. His journal, the *Intransigeant*, could find no better name for the man whom France was honouring than "the last of the flunkie murderers."

The Moderates and Extremists are

in truth divided by a gulf which no compromise can bridge. First they are divided on questions of religion, the former being tolerant and clerical in sympathy, the latter possessed with a fanatical hatred of the Church; then they are at war on all questions arising over proprietary rights. The Extremists, wild with suspicion of corruption, smell a job in every act of State; the Moderates, on the other hand, tremble for their cherished rights of property, nor is their fear unreasonable. As things go no one can be sure what the Chamber will not do next. Quite recently a majority was almost found for a proposal to put a special tax upon the holders of French *rentes*; it was nothing more indeed than a piece of silly spite against investors, but none the less alarming. The proposal of an income-tax, again, is a question upon which the Republicans are hopelessly divided. The Moderates recoil from it with horror, believing, and with cause, that it might easily become a terrible engine of robbery and oppression; while the Extremists, who avow their determination to tax all unearned incomes to extinction, are furious with anger at delay. Certainly the millennium has not yet arrived in France.

The case of Belgium is in some ways even more important than that of France, for there the people have only just come into full possession of the franchise. Until 1893, when the Constitution was revised, the franchise was one of the narrowest in Europe. It is striking evidence of the instability of political institutions that King Leopold, in his speech to the Chamber in that year, was able to describe the Belgian as the oldest of the written constitutions of Europe. Dating from 1831 this old Constitution gave about forty-five thousand voters only for a population of something like four millions. In the year

1848 this proportion was very slightly extended by lowering the property qualification ; but it was not till 1893 that any approach was made to a wide extension of the franchise. Now there is practically universal suffrage tempered by what is called the dual vote, a provision which appears to be unique. One vote is given to every man of the age of twenty-five who is not otherwise disqualified ; but a second vote is given, first to every married man or widower of the age of thirty-five with legitimate children, who pays at least five francs in respect of the house or building which he occupies ; secondly, to every man of twenty-five who possesses realty worth two thousand francs, or an income of one hundred francs from State investments ; and thirdly to every man who has certain educational certificates, or who belongs to those professions or occupies those posts which afford a guarantee that his education has reached a certain standard. Nobody, however, can have more than three votes. The practical result is that nearly every man in Belgium has a vote, that almost as many have two votes, and a considerable number three. But the chief point of interest is this, that there democracy is absolutely new, and that what we have lately witnessed there constitutes the earliest acts of that democracy in the first enjoyment of its rights.

The first election under the provisions of the new Constitution took place in last October. Formerly there had existed two great parties in Belgium, the Clerical and the Liberal, which, much as the Conservatives and Liberals in England, had alternately held office ; but at the last election the Socialists rose as one man, and almost effaced the Liberals. The Clerical party won by an immense majority, gaining no less than one hundred and four seats ; but the Liberals only gained

fifteen, while the Socialists actually succeeded in winning thirty-three. That this was due in some degree to divisions among the Liberals themselves, and to the fact that some of them voted for the Socialists, is probably true enough, but that does not alter the serious nature of the outlook. A strong Liberal party in the Chamber would have done something to soften and lubricate the conflicts between the contending Clericals and Socialists. As it is, there are drawn up in contending array two parties whose views on almost everything are violently opposed, and between whom there can be nothing but relentless war. It is not a state of things which can bring any good to Belgium ; for the deeper the divisions, the more bitter the contest is likely to become. The moderate Liberals will merge with the Clericals, while those of more progressive views will throw in their lot with the Socialists. Where issues of fundamental principle are at stake ; where there is a question of religion or its absence, and of private or collective ownership of property, there is no room for concession or for compromise. And it so happens that in Belgium these political divisions correspond in the main with two different portions of the country. The Flemish provinces in the North are chiefly agricultural and Catholic, and it is from these the Clericals draw the greater portion of their strength ; the Walloon provinces in the South have a large industrial population, who are naturally more addicted to Socialist theories. To the certainty of a war of classes is added therefore the possibility of geographical dismemberment. There seems indeed every prospect that the Flemings of the North will, if the Socialists strongly press their claims, separate themselves in preference to surrender. These are the first-fruits of democracy in Belgium.

Such then, very briefly, is the present drift of democracy in France and Belgium, and the prospect is not one which even the man of most catholic sympathies can view with any satisfaction. If indeed Socialism be sound in theory and a practicable scheme, then our French and Belgian neighbours are much to be congratulated. Their eyes already meet the beams of a brighter day, while ours peer hopelessly through the enshrouding gloom. If on the other hand Socialism is, as most competent thinkers believe, radically false in theory and impossible in practice, a system utterly at variance with the wants of human nature, and a scheme which could only for a moment be built up on the ruins of society, then indeed what has recently happened in France and Belgium may well fill us with alarm. For it is evident that the more active portion of the people which congregates in cities is being increasingly allured by these wild idealists; that instead of fixing their attention upon the attain-

able, they are pursuing unsubstantial visions, and dreaming dreams as vain as any that ever issued from the ivory gate. If they continue in this course, only one result can ensue; there will be a horizontal cleavage in society and a desperate war of classes. Democracy may be now the only form of government to which the Western nations are likely to submit; but it is a perilous experiment. "A theory concerning government," said Burke, "may become as much a cause of fanaticism as a dogma in religion." The Socialists of France and Belgium have a theory concerning government, and they are pursuing it with an all-consuming zeal. They have as much a creed, a dogma, a religion, as ever had the priests of the Holy Inquisition. That is why the actions of our continental neighbours are of so much interest and importance to ourselves. For political theories, no less than religious systems, have their proselytes.

COLLINGWOOD.¹

WE have heard in the past, and we continue to hear in the present a great deal concerning Napoleon's Marshals. The glamour of the short Napoleonic period is strong, the fascination in the story of the Revolution that gave it birth yet stronger; above all the personality of the great Corsican himself, in fame as in life, is irresistible. Men gaze at his astonishing career and are lost in amazement first over the man himself, and next over the number of able lieutenants that he was able to rally round him. It is true that even before the fall of their master the Peninsular war had done somewhat to dim their glory; but none the less their reputation is and remains great. Their names are still dear to Frenchmen; their biographies and memoirs are devoured by all devotees (and what Frenchman is not a devotee?) of *la Gloire*; their history is not abandoned to the rank and file of the literary profession; their lives and works, as Marmont's for instance at the hands of Sainte Beuve, find appreciation from the Marshals of criticism. They are treated as a unique group of phenomena; and the only reply hitherto given, when explanation of their appearance is demanded, is the oracular sentence, "*La carrière ouverte aux talents*, the best place for the best man," a phrase which, like most of those coined during the Revolution, has ceased to ring true. For if the formula was reduced to practice in revolu-

tionary France, most certainly it was not in reactionary England; and yet there came out of England in that terrible twenty years' war such an array of naval talent as has never been matched in the world's history. And this consideration leads us to ask why the Marshals of France are remembered and the Admirals and Captains of England forgotten? There are many Englishmen who can tell off the names of the Marshals, with their titles, glibly enough, and can discourse of Soult and Massena, of Lannes and Ney. But surely the names of the Englishmen are not less remarkable; Bridport, Cochrane, Collingwood, Duncan, Hood, Howe, Nelson, Saumarez, Sidney Smith, Troubridge, to say nothing of Blackwood, Brenton, Gardner, Keith, Martin and a dozen more that stand high in the second rank, for the time would fail us to enumerate them all. Surely the rise of so many giants of the sea is at least as notable as that of Napoleon's lieutenants ashore. Yet of how many of them have we any adequate knowledge? At most of two; of Cochrane, who as Earl of Dundonald wrote his own story, and of Nelson who found a fit biographer in Southey. Lives of many of the rest do indeed exist but are not easily to be found by the general public, nor, if the truth be told, are always worth reading when discovered. Take again the case of naval history; what had we but the laborious compilation of James until Captain Mahan (an American, be it observed,) came forward to show us the true quality of the officers and of the fleet that broke the power of Napoleon? The names of great naval heroes are forgotten, and their faces are un-

¹ 1. A SELECTION FROM THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE OF VICE-ADMIRAL LORD COLLINGWOOD, INTERSPERSED WITH MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE; by G. L. Newnham Collingwood. Two vols.; London, 1828.

2. THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL LORD COLLINGWOOD; by W. Clark Russell. London, 1895.

familiar. We can show in London statues in abundance of soldiers, Charles Napier, Robert Napier, Havlock, Gordon, Burgoyne; not one of St. Vincent, Hood, Collingwood, or Cochrane. Nelson stands aloft in Trafalgar Square surrounded by generals who never saw his face, not by the captains who fought his battles with him.

—Ilacrimabiles

Urgentur ignotique longa

Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.

We have been led to these reflections by the perusal of Mr. Clark Russell's recently published *LIFE OF ADMIRAL LORD COLLINGWOOD*. There exists an earlier biography of Collingwood, published by his son-in-law in 1828, an excellent book, as Mr. Russell truly says, and we may add also a delightful book. It is however less a story of Collingwood's life than a collection of Collingwood's letters, strung together, with no lack of judgment, on a slender thread of narrative. Still even in this form it passed through at least four editions within the space of a year, and is consequently still purchasable in its original boards for a few shillings at many a bookstall. But a continuous history of Collingwood's life remained yet to be written; it has waited, in fact, to be written since the death of the great Admiral eighty-five years ago. One can hardly think on such neglect without shame. If, however, the task has remained unfulfilled for three generations, we can at any rate rejoice that it has at last been committed to the right hands. Mr. Clark Russell has not only discovered a number of Collingwood's hitherto unprinted letters, but has approached his subject with rare insight, knowledge, and sympathy. The life of a man who spent forty-four years of his three-score and two at sea, the greater part thereof in tedious and uninteresting operations, is not easily

made palatable to landsmen; but here Mr. Russell's skill as a writer of sea-stories has stood him in good stead. By a hundred bright touches he reminds us perpetually that we are on blue water, and, while never suffering the thought to oppress us, enables us to realise the appalling discomfort, tedium, and anxiety of cruises which were reckoned not by weeks, but by months and even years. And on the blue water Mr. Clark Russell shows us the British fleet of a century ago, ships, officers, and men, lightly, but sufficiently and authentically drawn, and all subordinated to a grand central figure. A long intimacy with naval history and a profound and just reverence for his hero have helped his literary skill to display to us Collingwood in all his greatness; and we owe him thanks for a first, and withal an abiding, portrait of one of the noblest sailors who ever wore the king's uniform.

Cuthbert Collingwood was born at Newcastle-on-Tyne on the 26th of September, 1748, that is to say two years before the date assigned for his birth by his own son-in-law, and still perpetuated on his monument in St. Paul's Cathedral; a curious discrepancy which, however, need not detain us here. Though his family was one of the most ancient in Northumberland, his father was of no greater station than a small, and, it must be added, an unsuccessful, tradesman, whose whole fortune at his death amounted to but nine hundred pounds. Cuthbert, however, received a cheap though excellent education at the grammar-school under a teacher of exceptional ability and sympathy, until in 1761 he went to sea in the Shannon under the protection of a relation, one Admiral Brathwaite. It was not until 1775 that he had experience of active service, being a spectator of the terrible conflict of Bunker's Hill. So few people remem-

ber Bunker's Hill as one of the bloodiest actions ever fought by the British, that we may mention that our losses amounted to over a thousand of the two thousand men engaged. From the American coast he passed to the West Indies, fortunately escaping Admiral Graves's unsuccessful action with the French off the Chesapeake, and there met, and began his memorable friendship with, Nelson. As fast as Nelson was promoted, Collingwood stepped into his place; and finally the two friends served together in the disastrous Central American campaign known as the San Juan expedition. Nelson fell dangerously ill; but Collingwood though he buried one hundred and eighty out of two hundred of his ship's company was strong enough to resist the climate; and, being relieved in command of the *Hinchinbrooke* in August, took over that of the *Pelican* in December, 1780. In the following year the *Pelican* was wrecked in the memorable hurricane of 1781, a storm still remembered by tradition in the West Indies, and Collingwood barely escaped with his life. Little appears to be known of his doings at this period, though it is that wherein Hood and Rodney made their names in naval history. We gather only that when peace was signed with France in 1783 he was in command of the *Samson*; and that shortly after he returned once more to the West Indies in the *Mediator*. Nelson was on the same station in the *Boreas*, and was so active in enforcing the Navigation Laws that he dared not go ashore for fear of the merchants. "Had it not been for Collingwood," he wrote, "this station would have been the most disagreeable that I ever saw." In 1786 Collingwood returned home and, to use his own words, made the acquaintance of his own family, to which he had hitherto been, as it were, a stranger. This, the

quietest period of his life and his longest spell ashore, lasted until 1790, when the dispute with Spain, which is generally identified with the name of Nootka Sound, called him to the command of the *Mermaid* frigate. Once again he was sent to the West Indies; but, on the amicable settlement of the Spanish quarrel, soon returned home. Seeing no immediate chance of further employment he went back to Northumberland, and in June, 1791, married Miss Blackett, daughter of the reigning Mayor of Newcastle. He then settled down in a house at Morpeth where, in the two following years two daughters were born to him, to whom, as Fate ordained it, he was doomed to remain, except on paper, almost unknown. For on the 1st of February, 1793, the National Convention of France declared war against England, and the great death-struggle began that was only to be closed at Waterloo. Collingwood was appointed to the command of the *Prince*, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Bowyer in Lord Howe's fleet. Then came a season of weary and profitless cruising, "a series of vexations, disappointments, and bad weather." It was no fault of the Admiral, nor indeed of any one except the men who built British ships inferior to the French. The *Prince* was the worst sailer in the fleet, and was finally exchanged by Bowyer, in March, 1794, for the *Barfleur*.

On the 2nd of May Lord Howe's fleet of thirty-four ships of the line with smaller vessels and a large convoy, one hundred and forty-eight sail in all, got under way from St. Helen's; and on the 4th, the convoy having parted company with its protecting vessels, Howe was left with twenty-six sail of the line, seven frigates and other smaller craft. On the 16th he passed the French fleet in a fog, so near at hand as to hear the

noise of its signals on bell and drum ; and finally on the 28th and 29th the two fleets brushed against each other, and there was hard fighting. On the 30th the fog again came down, but cleared away on the following day, leaving twenty-four hours wherein the British fleet could rally itself for the great battle of the 1st of June.

"The night (of the 31st)," writes Collingwood, "was spent in watching and preparation for the succeeding day ; and many a blessing did I send forth to my Sarah lest I should never bless her more. At dawn we made our approach on the enemy, then drew up, dressed our ranks, and it was about eight when the Admiral made the signal for each ship to engage her opponent and bring her to close action ; and then down we went under a crowd of sail, and in a manner that would have animated the coldest heart and struck terror into the most intrepid enemy. The ship we were to engage was two ahead of the French Admiral, so that we had to go through his fire and that of two ships next him, and received all their broadsides two or three times before we fired a gun. It was then near ten o'clock. I observed to the Admiral that about that time our wives were going to church, but that I thought the peal we should ring about the Frenchmen's ears would outdo their parish bells. Lord Howe began his fire some time before we did ; and he is not in the habit of firing soon. We got very near indeed, and then began such a fire as would have done you good to have heard. During the whole action the most exact order was preserved, and no accident happened, but what was inevitable and the consequence of the enemy's shot. In ten minutes the Admiral (Bowyer) was wounded ; I caught him in my arms as he fell ; the First Lieutenant was slightly wounded by the same shot, and I thought I was

in a fair way of being left on deck by myself ; but the Lieutenant got his head dressed and came up again. Soon after they called from the forecastle that the ship was sinking, at which the men started up and gave three cheers. I saw the French ship dismasted and on her broadside, but in an instant she was clouded with smoke, and I do not know whether she sank or not. All the ships in our neighbourhood are dismasted and are taken, except the French Admiral who was driven out of the line by Lord Howe and saved himself by flight. At about twenty minutes past twelve the fire slackened, the French fled and left us seven of their fine ships . . . and *Le Vengeur*, which last sank the same evening, so that you see we have had as complete a victory as could be won. . . ."

Such, in what Mr. Clark Russell truly calls one of the most charming letters in the language, is Collingwood's account of this memorable action. Unfortunately his satisfaction was short-lived. When the news of the victory reached England a medal was granted to every captain mentioned in Lord Howe's despatch ; but among them the name of Collingwood was not to be found, so that there was no medal for him. He was deeply hurt, and so likewise were many of his more fortunate comrades for his sake. "If Collingwood," said one, "has not deserved the medal, neither have I, for we were together the whole day." Lord Howe was taken to task for his despatch, and was soon heartily sorry that he had ever set his name to it. The fact was that, finding himself completely exhausted at the close of the action, he had left the writing thereof to his flag-captain, Sir Roger Curtis, an officer who has left an unenviable reputation behind him. Collingwood, with a warmth that is most unusual in him, calls Curtis in a

private letter "an artful sneaking creature," and the epithet is by no means too strong for the man who sat as president in the infamous court-martial on Lord Gambier. There however the matter for the present rested, and Collingwood was far too good an officer to allow neglect to sour him.

We find him next in the *Excellent*, taking a convoy of merchantmen to Leghorn. Marryat has given us a vivid picture of the troubles of convoying in those days, and has described to us the protecting frigate sailing round and round her troublesome charge, and actually firing into them to make them keep up. "Figure," says Mr. Russell, "figure seventy or eighty sail of ships, many of them heavy round-bowed old merchantmen so shaped in beam and length that they might have been built by the league and sawn off as customers required them. A dozen ships at a time would be lagging; the naval officer in command would signal them,—but to no purpose; the sour old merchant-skipper, wrapped up in pilot-cloth, eyed the epaulet askant and sulkily went to work to give as much trouble as possible." No less a man than Cochrane once started from Halifax with a large convoy, and arrived at Plymouth with a single vessel, and that vessel in tow. Collingwood, on this shorter voyage, records with relief that he has got his convoy safe off his hands, though at the cost of great exertion. "I seldom slept more than two hours at a time all the way out, and took such true care of my charge that not one was missing. All the masters came on board my ship to thank me for my care and attention to their safety."

The *Excellent* then joined the fleet, under Sir John Jervis, that was occupied with the blockade of Toulon. It was weary work, and the British

navy may bless the advent of steam for the summary end that it has set to all blockading. Collingwood, in the dearth of fresh provisions, pined even for the bad potatoes that his old gardener at Morpeth used to throw away as worthless; but with Jervis in command the fleet was kept in a healthy state even after twenty-eight weeks at sea. It is always worth while to note the care which our great naval commanders have taken of their men; Cook, Jervis, Nelson, Collingwood, Cochrane, to name a few out of many, are all equally remarkable in this respect. But all Jervis's pains could not save the fleet from terrible damage from storms. Two of his ships perished outright, and others were so far crippled that it was with but eleven sail of the line that he made for Cape St. Vincent to pick up a reinforcement of five ships, sent him by Lord Bridport in January, 1797. A month later, on St. Valentine's day, the great battle was fought which gave Jervis his title of Lord St. Vincent. Captain Mahan has brought vividly before us the story of the action: how Jervis with his fifteen ships flew upon the Spanish twenty-seven, to use Collingwood's words, "as a hawk to his prey," cut their line in two and then tacked upon the larger division; how Troubridge, who led the British line, answered St. Vincent's signal to tack before it was well blown out; how Nelson, taking the initiative, wore out of the line and attacked on his own account; and how Collingwood, after crushing two Spanish ships, "disdained the parade of taking possession of beaten enemies," and pushed on to the rescue of Nelson who was engaged with no fewer than three adversaries. But we must transcribe a few lines from Collingwood's own account of the action in a letter to his wife. Readers will note the similes

drawn for her benefit from "our garden" and a "bodkin."

"The first ship we engaged was the *San Salvador del Mundo* of 112 guns, a first-rate; we were not further from her when we began than the length of our garden. Her colours soon came down, and her fire ceased. I hailed and asked if they surrendered; and when by signs made by a man who stood by the colours, I understood that they had, I left her to be taken possession of by somebody behind, and made sail for the next, but was very much surprised on looking back to find her colours up again and her battle recommenced. We very soon came up with the next, the *San Isidro*, 74, and so close alongside that a man might jump from one ship to the other. Our fire carried all before it; and in ten minutes she hauled down her colours, but I had been deceived once and obliged this fellow to hoist English colours before I left him, and made a signal for somebody behind to board him, when the Admiral ordered the *Lively* frigate to take charge of him. Then making all sail, passing between our line and the enemy, we came up with the *San Nicolas* of 80 guns, which happened at the time to be abreast of the *San Josef* of 112 guns; we did not touch sides, but you could not put a bodkin between us, so that our shot passed through both ships, and in attempting to extricate themselves they got on board each other. My good friend the Commodore [Nelson] had been long engaged with these ships, and I came happily to his relief, for he was dreadfully mauled. Having engaged them until their fire ceased on me, though their colours were not down, I went on to the *Santissima Trinidad*, the Spanish Admiral's ship of 132 guns on four complete decks, such a ship as I never saw before. . . . We were engaged an hour with the ship

and trimmed her well; she was a complete wreck. . . . God bless you, my dearest love! May you ever be happy."

The story is so simply and modestly told that one hardly realises that Collingwood had engaged five different ships, four of them of superior strength to his own. But the gunnery of the British fleet was superb, and that of Collingwood's ship always, if possible, ahead of the rest. This time his service did not want for recognition. Nelson thanked him in the warmest terms, treating his rescue not less as a personal than as a public matter; while Vice-Admiral Waldegrave and his captain Dacres likewise wrote to him with commendations hardly less flattering, and quoted the praise both of Nelson and St. Vincent. The medal for the action was awarded to him, but he, "with great feeling and firmness" refused it unless that for the 1st of June were granted to him also. "That is precisely the answer which I expected to have from Captain Collingwood," replied St. Vincent; and both medals were presently sent to him together.

For the next two years Collingwood remained with the fleet blockading Cadiz; but there was a more terrible enemy than French or Spaniards to be tackled at this time, for we now reach the outbreak of the mutinies at Spithead and the Nore. It is difficult to appreciate in these days the full magnitude of this terrible crisis, and the superb coolness wherewith the English authorities, from Pitt downwards, confronted it. Not a man seems to have lost his head. The present writer has by chance examined the official correspondence of the Port-Admiral at Portsmouth (Sir Peter Parker) at this period; and but for occasional utterances, showing indeed deep anxiety but no sign of despair, one would hardly guess that the mutiny

was in full swing. St. Vincent likewise had to face the prevailing disaffection in his fleet, and did so with the magnificent masterfulness that has become a proverb. We need hardly recall the story of the ship's company that gave signs of refusing to hang some condemned mutineers of its own number; how the one-armed captain reported to St. Vincent that his men would not obey the order, how St. Vincent swore that they should, and how finally the doomed men were swung up by their messmates to the yard-arm, and St. Vincent, raising his hat, uttered the grim words, "Discipline is preserved, Sir."

Such was one of the Admiral's remedies for mutineers, but the other, though less violent, was quite as effective. "Send them to Collingwood," he used to say, "and he will bring them to order." and Collingwood did bring them to order, not by the "cat," but by simple firmness and justice. The man, in fact, was stronger than any weapon of punishment. The record of one year's punishment, that of 1793, is preserved, from which it appears that he flogged but twelve men in the twelve months, never inflicting more than twelve lashes and generally no more than six or seven. Such punishment was hardly to be reckoned a flogging in those days. But Collingwood hated the "cat"; and when we reflect that even Cochrane, who loved his men and was worshipped by them, pleaded hard against the abolition of flogging, we can only marvel that a man, with no magic of personality such as Nelson's or Cochrane's, could have found his own force of character sufficient to cope with the greatest ruffians in the service. He was unquestionably the finest disciplinarian in the navy, and for all his humanity a stern man. "I know your character well," he said to a dangerous mutineer who was sent to him to be tamed. "If you behave

well in future I will treat you like the rest, nor notice here what happened in another ship; but if you endeavour to excite mutiny, mark me well, I will instantly head you up in a cask and throw you into the sea." There was no more trouble with that man. But as a rule Collingwood, like the best officers in both services, preferred punishments which would cause a man to be laughed at by his comrades, well knowing that this is the one thing that he cannot endure. Marryat has sketched for us such an officer in "Remedy Jack," the first lieutenant of Peter Simple's first ship. And Collingwood kept officers in as good order as men. "I have given you a commission into the Excellent," said St. Vincent, to a young officer, "but remember that you are going to a man who will take it away from you to-morrow if you behave ill." He also paid particular attention to his midshipmen, considering it a point of honour with himself that not one should leave him unfit to pass for promotion. Yet it was his inflexible rule to uphold the authority of every officer, whatever his rank, with the same severity as his own. If a midshipman made complaint against a man, that man was unfailingly ordered for punishment next day; but meanwhile Collingwood took the lad aside and suggested to him the propriety of asking grace for the culprit when he should be brought out. "In all probability the fault was yours," he would say; "but whether it was or not, I am sure it would go to your heart to see a man old enough to be your father disgraced and punished on your account." So the midshipman interceded, the captain, with some show of reluctance, pardoned, and discipline was upheld. On the other hand, he would not even permit his officers to address a man as "you sir," (a form of appellation which lasted in the army until the Crimean war, but now survives,

so far as we know, only among the negroes in the West Indies,) on the ground that it was unnecessarily discourteous and contemptuous. "If you don't know a man's name," he said, rather implying that an officer ought to know his men by name, "call him sailor."

This troublesome period of mutiny passed, Collingwood, for all his good service, was destined to suffer another severe disappointment. His ship, though in every respect in perfect condition, was not one of those which sailed with Nelson to fight the battle of the Nile. His letters at this time are almost plaintive (though never unmanly) in their regret that he should not have taken part in his old friend's greatest victory. In the following year (1799) came the series of blunders whereby St. Vincent and Keith, between them, contrived to allow the French Admiral Bruix to make a raid into the Mediterranean, effect a junction with the Spanish fleet, and return in safety to Brest. This failure led to much bad blood in the fleet, and to an angry wrangle as to the man who should be held responsible. The public blamed Keith, Cochrane, who hated St. Vincent, acquits him; Collingwood, who was much saddened by the whole fiasco, shows pretty clearly that both were in fault. Seeing from the first that the whole plan of operations was mistaken, he predicted the issue some months before it was fulfilled with an accuracy that speaks volumes for his strategical insight.

Meanwhile he had in February, 1789, been promoted to be Rear-Admiral of the White, and on returning from Keith's fleet in the Mediterranean, was attached to the Channel fleet under St. Vincent and employed in the blockade of Brest. Under Lord Bridport's command a good deal of slackness had crept into

the Channel squadron, and, in Nelson's words, it required a man of Collingwood's firmness to keep some of the captains up to their duty. But now the peace of Amiens gave him a little rest, and a last happy time at Morpeth with his beloved wife and his two little girls. He threw himself into the peace of domestic life with passionate enjoyment, reading extensively, superintending the education of his children, and, above all, gardening. It is curious to remark the fascination that the tilling of the soil possesses for fighting men; Marmont and Cochrane, for instance, turned to it with eagerness in their days of retirement. Then came the renewal of the war in 1803, and the close of the one year that Collingwood spent ashore in England from 1793 to his death in 1810. "Here comes Collingwood," said Admiral Cornwallis, when he assembled his fleet for the blockade of Brest, "the last to leave and the first to join me." His industry and vigilance in the prosecution of the blockade was stupendous. He never lay down but with his clothes on, and passed whole nights pacing the quarter-deck. His lieutenant would occasionally press him to take rest as he must be exhausted by fatigue. "I fear *you* are," the Admiral would answer; "so go to bed, Clavell, and I will watch by myself." Sometimes the pair would doze for a time on a gun, Collingwood starting up from time to time to sweep the horizon with his night-glass. Heavy gales and unseaworthy ships added to the misery of the life. His flagship on survey proved to be utterly rotten. "We have been sailing for two months with only a sheet of copper between us and eternity." Moreover there was the discomfort, to which the necessities of the blockade subjected him, of constantly shifting from ship to ship. Yet there he remained, vigilant

and careful as ever, recording with pride that even after eighteen weeks at sea he had not a sick man on board his vessel. Mr. Russell may well dwell on the wretchedness of blockading. We must, however, remark in passing that when, as occasionally happens, he calls in question the whole policy of blockade, and advocates Howe's system in preference to St. Vincent's, he raises points which are, to say the least, debateable.

About the middle of 1804 Collingwood was detached southward in pursuit of the French fleet, and in August, when cruising with but five ships under his command, was chased by the combined fleets of France and Spain, thirty-six vessels in all. Determined not to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar unless they followed him, he turned in the Gut and (to use the phrase of a contemporary writer) "smiled at them"; and when finally they abandoned the chase and returned to Cadiz, he pursued them and blockaded them therein with his little squadron. His boldness and skill on this occasion, perhaps only to be truly appreciated by seamen, were warmly praised by his brother officers, and especially by Nelson. Shortly after he was reinforced by eighteen sail of the line under Sir Robert Calder, and then the weary work of interminable cruising began again, first before Rochefort, and then before Brest. An occasional run to Torbay gave little relief and no change, for not a man from the fleet went ashore, and visitors from the land had to take the risk of an involuntary voyage. At last on the 21st of October the French and Spanish fleets were caught at Trafalgar. Every Englishman knows how Collingwood led the way into the fight far ahead of any other ship, made first for the *Santa Anna*, crushed her with a broadside which killed three hundred and fifty men, and was

presently engaged with no fewer than five of the enemy. And in the midst of the contest the gallant old Admiral, in his best uniform, knee-breeches, silk stockings and buckled shoes, paced watchfully to and fro munching an apple. "You had better put on silk stockings as I have," he said to his first lieutenant on the morning of the fight; "for if one should get shot in the leg they would be so much more manageable for the surgeon." As the struggle went on he went down among the men, sighted several of the guns himself and encouraged all hands. At one moment, in the hottest of the fire, he gave way to his ruling passion of economy of the King's stores, solemnly rolled up, with the assistance of his first lieutenant, a topgallant studding-sail, which was hanging loose over the hammocks, and stowed it carefully away, observing that it would be wanted some other day.

After the action came the task of facing a furious gale with a fleet of disabled ships. Nelson's last orders had been for the fleet to anchor, and Collingwood has been repeatedly blamed for neglecting them; but Mr. Clark Russell shows conclusively that it was impracticable in the circumstances to obey them. All that Collingwood could do he did, which was to destroy the captured ships; and this in itself was a task so difficult that St. Vincent declared his conduct in accomplishing it to be above all praise. But still he kept the sea, "to show the enemy that it was not a battle or a storm which could remove a British squadron from the station which they were ordered to hold." The news of the victory at home procured for him a peerage and a pension of £2,000 a year for his life; but little consideration was paid to his wishes in respect to the fleet. He pleaded hard for some special

reward for officers and men, as the usual profits of victory had been lost through the destruction of the prizes, and he pressed for the promotion of deserving officers; but neither request was granted. Still he knew his duty and could do it, and that was enough for him. "The Admiralty have abandoned me," he wrote. "I never hear from them, but am labouring for everything that is to promote the interest of my country." He begged but one thing for himself, namely, that his title might descend to his daughter. "I believe your Lordship will allow that I have a sort of claim to be indulged," he wrote with pathetic humour, "when I tell you that but for my constant service at sea since the year 1793, I should probably ere now have had half-a-dozen sons to succeed me." It must have been a hard man that refused a plea so quaintly and yet tellingly put forward, but refused it was.

Our space is running out, and we must perforce abridge the closing years of Collingwood's life. He entered after Trafalgar upon a task of diplomacy no less than strategy that fairly wore him out. Complications in Sicily, in Calabria, in Turkey, in Portugal and in Spain (for we now approach the opening of the Peninsular war) kept him tied to his desk and worried by anxiety day and night. Bad luck also dogged his operations against the French, and it was not until late in 1809, six months after Cochrane had made his memorable attack on the fleet in Aix Roads, that he at last got among the fragments of the French navy and broke them up. His health by that time was hopelessly undermined; hard life at sea (he was actually twenty-two consecutive months afloat without dropping anchor in those last years), and still harder work as Commander-in-Chief had found out his weak point. By the opening of 1810

a stomacic complaint, which had long tortured him, became so severe that he could scarcely eat; and at last on the 3rd of March, 1810, he resigned his command and embarked on the *Ville de Paris* for England. To all subordinates he had willingly granted leave, but to himself never. With all his home-sickness, for never man yearned to return to his wife and daughters more earnestly than Collingwood, he stuck to his duty to the last, and died, but four days after the resignation of his command, on the 7th of March, 1810.

He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral by the side of Nelson on the 11th of May. One of the many unsightly masses of marble that cumber the eastern end of the south aisle records with no extraordinary felicity the services which he rendered; and the debt of honour thus discharged, the nation has conspired to forget him. Yet he was, as we have said, one of the noblest sailors who ever wore the King's uniform, the very finest example of an officer and a gentleman that can be held up to all ranks of the navy. In the three most dazzling naval commanders of that time, Nelson, Cochrane, and Sidney Smith, one has always a perception of some theatrical element. We feel sadly convinced that if they had lived in these days they would have suffered the reporter gladly, and submitted their early portraits to *THE STRAND MAGAZINE*. Brilliant as was the work that they did, they never quite forgot themselves therein. Collingwood was cast in a different mould. He always ignored himself and his own share in the work. No one could gather from his despatch a hint of his extraordinary gallantry at Trafalgar. Yet his was no cold, haughty, cynical nature, for he was as soft-hearted as a woman, and keenly sensitive to ill-treatment or neglect. His sense of duty was as high as Wellington's, yet without Wellington's

ton's sternness and reserve. Wellington could win the confidence of his men, but Collingwood gained not only their confidence but their love. Hardly as he was used by the Admiralty he never turned upon it; to him there was something greater than the Admiralty, and that was his country. So while a brilliant genius like Cochrane dashed his head fruitlessly against corrupt Departments and peculating Admiralty Courts, old Collingwood though worn out with exile, over-work, and disease, stuck silently to his post, taking thought for nothing of his own affairs except the full payment of his income-tax. Always, in the heaviest press of his work, he was careful to transmit an exact account of his income, that he might pay to his country the uttermost farthing. One more service to England remains yet to be recorded, the gift, none the less valuable be-

cause unconscious, of some of the very best letters and despatches in the language. Collingwood's style was the admiration of all his contemporaries, and has been undeservedly neglected by the present generation. Whether in despatches describing the gale after Trafalgar, or in playful and tender letters to his wife, we find always the same strength, felicity, and grace. "Read, I charge you, read," was his advice to a young officer. May we not impress it upon some of our modern lieutenants, and ask them to write for us some naval biographies, taking his style for their model? There is many a fine subject still untreated, many a noble figure still unportrayed; and for a standard whereby to judge of them there is always the history of Cuthbert Collingwood, a great sailor, a great patriot, and a great man.

THE HERONS.¹

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE next time Mr. Heron saw Cosmo he was dismayed at the change in his looks. Hitherto the Squire had found his son cheery enough, in spite of aches and pains and the constraint that was the inevitable result of a forbidden subject of conversation present in both their minds. But now it was plain that he was terribly depressed, if so gentle a word can be applied to the anger and gloom that seemed to lie upon him like a weight; while the forbidden subject was as strictly forbidden as ever. Mr. Heron had his own thoughts, and asked himself many questions, but he asked them of no one else; and meanwhile the days went on and Cosmo's youth and strength asserted themselves in spite of all drawbacks, till at last there was talk of fixing the day for his leaving the hospital.

Then the Squire began tentatively to hint at change of air and so forth; and Cosmo, lifting eyes that in the last month had grown to look many years older, faced his father gravely and fully. "I will go back with you to Herne's Edge if you will have me, —for good," he said in an even, expressionless tone. Mr. Heron nodded and began to talk of arrangements for the journey, while to himself he said: "He knows then! My poor boy! I wonder it didn't kill him. I suppose Edmund told him; but if Edmund thinks I shall forgive him on that account he is much mistaken."

Not a word more was said on the subject between the strange pair who

understood each other so well. Cosmo knew that, in so far as he had done his father injustice, he was forgiven already without words; and whatever regret he felt on that account he added to the long score against his brother that his thoughts were always reckoning up. He did not ask himself whether he could ever forgive Edmund. Forgiveness seemed to him to have nothing to do with the matter. As Althea had said to him on one memorable occasion: "You may forgive people for what they *do*, but who shall forgive them for what they *are*?"

Cosmo was too young and too sensitive not to feel acutely that he had been deceived, lied to, thrust into a false position, made to oppose and insult father, mother, and wife. His own wrongs however he might overlook, while as for the personal sacrifices he had made he would have scorned to take them into account. But nothing, no forgiveness, could alter the fact that Edmund had done what no Heron, no gentleman, should have found it possible to think of. He had not only lied and forged, he had committed a nameless, unpardonable sin in playing for his own purposes on his mother's unconfessed desire to be reconciled to her husband. He had said that he would have picked a pocket, had that been practicable, to escape from the strait in which he found himself; Cosmo would infinitely rather that he had picked a pocket than have done the thing he had found it in his heart to do. There could be no question now of

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putting him in his right place. His right place was not among gentlemen, or under the roof that had covered in its day many a sin and many a sorrow, but never baseness, never open shameless shame.

Cosmo had no heart to speak of it; if he thought of it all day long it was against his will; but he thoroughly and entirely agreed with his father. It was not for nothing that he had been brought up in the intensest, stateliest form of family pride, a pride that could see nothing derogatory in the lowliest poverty or the humblest toil, but to which the touch of shame was like the stain on the fur of the ermine,—a thing to die of. He was naturally more tender-hearted than his father, and he had known and loved Margaret and the children, which Mr. Heron had been too wise ever to permit himself to do; but not even for their sakes could he ever desire to see Edmund again. In his morbid misery he felt sometimes as though he could never live at Herne's Edge, any more than his brother; that what one had forfeited by shame the other would be shamed in taking; and that the only thing to do was to force Edmund to join in cutting off the entail, and then sell the old place, give him the proceeds, and let him do what he would with them. To be sure it would break the Squire's heart; and it seemed to Cosmo that it would break his own too, for young hearts break even more easily than old ones, though it is more possible to mend them; but after all it was but a choice of evils, and heartbreak was not the worst.

Meanwhile he was not strong enough to do anything, or even to feel sure of what ought to be done, and it was better to let his father take him home than to risk meeting Edmund again. There was nothing that they could say to one another;

and though he thought that he had now no pity for his brother, it hurt him even to think of that unmisgiving look of love in Edmund's eyes.

Geoffrey Pierce was another whom Cosmo had no wish to meet. He had had a warm letter from Geoffrey, full of inquiries and regrets that he himself was still tied to the bedside of his relative and could not come and see how things were with them all. This Cosmo answered as cordially; but he would not see Edmund's friend, the man who still tried to believe in and respect him, who did not know that he had forfeited all claim to respect years before they had ever met. "He ought to know," said Cosmo bitterly to himself; "but surely I am not bound to tell him. Neither am I bound to play the hypocrite, as I should have to do if we met and I did not tell him."

So he went home, or rather allowed himself to be taken home, in such a hopeless mood of bitterness and discouragement as naturally prevented his recovering his strength as he ought to have done, and kept his father anxious, in a taciturn fashion, about him. They said that the journey had been too much for him, and he did not care to exert himself to deny it. He let his father and the doctor and the old housekeeper have their will of him for the most part, while he spent his time in languidly pretending to read or write, and perpetually revolving the same round of gloomy thoughts which only his father could guess at.

Althea in the meantime had slipped into her old place at Number Fifteen, but with a difference. Her sister found her just as gentle a companion, and the children just as merry a playmate, as before; yet there was a change in her deeper than the mere

ripening and softening of her childish beauty, and the embellishment of dresses such as were not often seen in Burton Road.

She had grown a woman ; she knew her fate, and no longer waited as girls do for an unknown mysterious future. And especially, since she had learned to compare her lot with that of Magdalen Anderson, she had accepted it with a sort of despair that was proud and even cheerful. It seemed to her to be the rule that women should not be happy. But most of the unhappiness she had seen,—at least its bitterest drop—had been the pain of love given to one who was not worthy of it. From that misfortune at any rate she was safe ; whether her love, being so worthily given, was valued or returned, seemed to her sometimes a small matter. Only at times, in hours of discouragement, she thought of Mrs. Heron, wondering whether her own lot in life would be like that ; whether years of hopeless hunger for love would leave her craving, scheming for power at least, and reckless as to how she strove to gain it. No one else had ever discovered that Mrs. Heron loved the husband from whom she was parted only second to the son who had always taken his father's side against her. But Althea was certain of it, though she knew not how she knew it ; and sometimes it chilled her with fear to see what love might come to, "on this crooked hither side of the grave."

Now that she found herself once more in Burton Road it seemed her duty to stay as long as she could with Margaret and the children ; to stay at least till Mr. or Mrs. Heron, or Cosmo, should signify what they wished her to do ; and with a store of pocket-money with which she had been provided she could ease rather than burden the slender income of the little household. Nor did she find it so

painful to be under Edmund's roof as she had expected. Whether he guessed that she knew too much, or whether he was merely depressed and moody, Edmund certainly made no attempt to go back to his old caressing, patronising, reproving manner with her. They saw as little of one another as two people could who had to live together within such narrow limits ; and day by day her indignation, though it was still there, was more overlaid with pity.

Up at Herne's Edge all through February the days lengthened, and the cold strengthened, while the world lay very still under a fresh covering of snow. The dales were nearly full of drifts, and the road that wound upward to Ernston, deeply cleft between the hills, was all but impassable. None went out and none came in, and the tiny town, with its thin threads of smoke stealing up to the gray winter sky, seemed cut off from all the rest of the world.

Over at the Edge, away from even the small stir of Ernston, all was so still that the days went by like a dream, the Squire watching over his son, and Cosmo saying to himself, "When this snow melts I will wake up and face the inevitable."

Mrs. Heron wrote nearly every day, and when Cosmo did not feel inclined to answer, her husband relieved her anxiety by brief ceremonious notes such as any gentleman might write to a lady with whom he was slightly acquainted. But she had never been over since they came back from London. Putting things together, Mrs. Heron had perceived that Cosmo must now know the truth about his brother, and that Mr. Heron at least must know that she had broken her solemn word in revealing the secret to Althea. That being the case, she was in no hurry to face him ; and she had sufficient excuse for not doing so, for a

lady seldom has her coachman so well in hand that she can oblige him to take her out in such a snow as that which now blocked every approach to Herne's Edge.

Nevertheless they had a visitor there even before the snow went. One sunny morning when the sky was dazzlingly blue above the white hill-tops, a smart little sleigh was drawn up with much jingling of bells before the curving steps of the gateway, and Mrs. Brotherton being helped out of it by her attentive husband, came with him up the clean swept walk towards the house door.

Mr. Heron, who was sitting by the huge fire in the hall studying his morning paper, looked up at the sound of their voices, and through the broad low Tudor window saw who his visitors were. His face darkened somewhat; and though he rose to meet and bring them in, and installed his niece in his own chair that she might warm her chilled feet on the hearth-stone, his brow hardly relaxed at her bright chatter or her husband's ponderous, good-natured greeting.

Emily Brotherton was not precisely afraid of the uncle who had brought her up and had been always good to her; but she had never asked him a question about himself in her life and was not likely to begin now, though she was quite quick enough to perceive that something was amiss. If she had known that Mr. Heron was thinking: "If this little fool had not taken it into her head to marry that great fool, she might have kept the boy content at home; he might never have bethought himself to go after Edmund, and everything would have been right!"—if she had known this, Emily might not have been displeased, so subtle a thing is vanity. A moment later she believed that she knew what was troubling the Squire, as Cosmo came slowly down the stairs,

making what was evidently his first appearance that morning. He started as he saw the arrivals, and came forward cordially enough to greet them; but the small excitement could not conceal the languor of his movements, or the deep shadows under his eyes that seemed to have quite altered their expression.

"Why, Cosmo, how ill you look! I hoped you would have been better by this time," exclaimed Emily; for which speech she got such a look from her uncle as used to reward the occasional indiscretions of her girlhood, and that then used to make her wish to sink into the ground. She was not now so easily annihilated, but, perceiving that she was thought to have done amiss, she endeavoured to atone for it by leading away the conversation so as to put a stop to her husband's kindly pertinacious inquiries; in the midst of which she got a glance from Cosmo's tired blue eyes telling her that he perfectly understood what she was after, and asking audaciously, moreover, if she did not sometimes find "Jem" conversationally rather heavy.

"You ought not to be here, Cosmo," said Mr. Heron uneasily after a few moments. "There is a draught from those doors enough to cut you in two."

"If it doesn't hurt other people it won't hurt me," said Cosmo lazily, but Emily promptly started up.

"It is all very well for us, who are so muffled up," she said; "but I want to take off my cloak, and I would rather go into the library. Won't you come with me, Cosmo? I have hardly had ten minutes' talk with you since I was married."

There could be but one answer to such an appeal. Cosmo opened the library door for his cousin and followed her into the room, where she quickly threw off her furs and made

herself comfortable by the fire, insisting on his taking the easy chair opposite.

It seemed very natural, very like old times to see her there. Emily had always been addicted to flitting irresponsibly in and out, perching by the fireside with little idle hands in her lap, and chattering away until some one with work to do rose in rebellion and turned her out of the room. As Cosmo lay back in his chair dreamily listening to her prattle, he too was thinking, as his father had done, of that boyish fancy of his that had been born too late, wondering how things might have been if Jem Brotherton had not existed, and whether in that case he would himself have found out before long that he wanted to marry his cousin. If it had been so Emily might now have been his wife, sitting here in her own home; he might never have seen Edmund, never have grown to care for him and his; never have known what now he knew and could never forget. But the shame, always liable to come to light, would have been there just the same, and the helpless suffering of the innocent, and the wrong that must breed more wrong. As for the rest, his own experiences during the past year, did he truly wish them all undone? The word wife brought a name into his thoughts that was not Emily's, and for a moment his thoughts pictured another face and form than hers in that chair on the other side the hearth. Had he been wronging some one, as well as wronged himself; had the great shipwreck left him with a treasure that he had flung aside unconsidered, but that was still his own? He hardly knew. It had only just dawned upon him, with a sort of surprise, that he could not altogether wish that the past had never been. But meanwhile Emily was asking him a question, and courtesy demanded

that he should come out of his reverie and answer her.

"Won't you come over to Ashurst and stay with us for a little while?" she was saying. "I am sure it is too dull for you here, and a little change will do you good. You haven't even a billiard table, and that is so nice in the winter."

"Thanks, you are very good," he said. "But I have promised to go down to Pennithorne as soon as I feel up to going anywhere."

"Ah, of course Aunt Janet will want you as soon as she can get you. Is Althea there now?"

"I—hardly know," said Cosmo, with a blush that would have been less vivid if he had been stronger.

"It will not be very lively for you there if she is not. You had better come to me, and I will take care that Aunt Janet doesn't hear of it."

"Thank you, no. I ought to go first to Pennithorne," repeated Cosmo half abstractedly. He was suddenly taking blame to himself, bitter blame and self-reproach, because he actually did not know where his young wife was at that moment. He had never written to her since Edmund's confession had made everything in the world seem not worth doing. He knew that she had been at Burton Road, and the mere thought of Burton Road had been bitterness to him. Now that he came to think of it, it was unlikely that his mother had let her stay there all this time; but if she was at Pennithorne, so near at hand, what must she think of the husband who had never taken the trouble to come or to write to her?

Emily was quick enough to perceive that her cousin was deep in disturbing thoughts, but not quite keen enough to guess their nature. Perhaps it was only natural vanity which suggested to her that he was resisting temptation, settling with himself that he

had better not visit his old love lest he should recall thoughts that it were wiser to banish, and that he ought instead to be by his wife's side at Pennithorne. And so, being a good woman in her own small way, Emily Brotherton went on to speak on the side of virtue and discretion. Whether she would have been magnanimous enough to do so if she had known how little occasion there was for it, is another matter into which there is no need to inquire. "Aunt Janet must have been very loth to part with your wife. I'm sure she would get her back as soon as she could. She is so sweet and gentle, we have all grown very fond of her. Is poor Edmund's wife really so like her?"

"Very like her, only older and graver, with much of her good looks worn away."

"Althea always struck me as being very grave for any one so young. But I dare say it was dull for her at Pennithorne with no one but Aunt Janet, and I never could get her to come to me as much as I wished." Emily had driven her little knife home. Cosmo winced, and did not answer, and she went on to give it a twist in the wound. "I think none of us could make up to her for your being away. The only thing she seemed to care about was making presents to her sister and the sister's children. I used to think, Cosmo, that it was hard upon her; that if she could not be with you she ought at least to have been with her sister, where she could have seen you every day. Men don't seem quite to understand how awkward it is for a woman to be away from her husband."

Cosmo felt much as if a pet bird had flown in his face and pecked him. He answered gravely: "I acted as I thought best for her. If you knew the discomforts of the home I brought

her from you would not wonder that both she and I thought it better that she should stay here."

"Discomforts!" scornfully echoed Emily Brotherton, who had been sheltered and guarded all her life from the slightest breath of discomfort. "She and you! Oh, Cosmo, you used to be nearly as clever as a woman, but you are getting just as dull as the rest."

"What do you mean? I am too dull at least to guess that."

"Do you really believe she thought of discomforts when she might have been with you? Do you think any true woman ever really thought it better that she should stay away from those she loved that she might have a nicer dinner and sleep on a softer bed?"

"You put it rather coarsely; and you don't know by experience, which is the only possible way to learn, what a poverty-stricken home is like. I did not oblige her to stay at Pennithorne; she must have had some reason for doing so; and whatever it was, neither you nor I have any right to blame her."

Cosmo's temper was not so equable as formerly. Emily had never heard him speak in such a tone since the occasional squabbles of their childhood. She promptly mislaid her temper also, though not beyond easy recovery. "Perhaps you never asked her what her reason was; I think you had better do so. Not being a Heron by birth she *may* have some reason to show for her actions; and for the honour of womanhood you need not conclude that it must be what you say."

Emily rose with some stateliness, and took a turn or two about the room. Cosmo sat looking straight before him, with eyes that seemed to be seeing something in a new light and marvelling what to make of it.

After a moment or two she came towards him and stood smiling by his chair, a slight gracious figure. "Why are you cross, Cosmo?"

"Because I have a sore conscience, little Emily, and—a sore heart too! Perhaps you never had either, and don't know what a bad effect they have on the temper."

"You are very severe on my ignorance to-day. Suppose you take my advice all the same, and then if it fails you may decide that I don't know what I am talking about. Let us be friends now any way, for Jem will be angry if I keep the cob waiting any longer."

Cosmo smiled and kissed the hand she held out to him, but in rather a spiritless fashion, or as if he were thinking more of something else. And the little lady gathered up her furs and fluttered out to announce her readiness to depart, revolving in her mind an idea and a plan of her own.

That night she wrote to Mrs. Heron, taking upon herself to advise that stately dame as she had never in her life ventured to do before. In consequence whereof Mrs. Heron desired her coachman to be prepared to drive her up to Herne's Edge in such a manner that the worthy man perceived the wisdom of making no new difficulties but rather setting himself to overcome those that already existed.

It was not till the next day, however, that Mrs. Heron got her niece's letter, and in the meanwhile Cosmo had had another visitor; one who was not dependent on carriages or coachmen, but came on her own sturdy feet. "Mrs. Pearson is in the servants' hall and wants to see you, sir," announced the servant. Cosmo, who was in the library alone, answered by desiring her to be shown in.

The good woman, stout and rosy,

with a pair of her husband's socks drawn over her own boots, and her skirts well tucked up out of the snow, came forward nothing abashed, and shook her head with affectionate criticism over the hand that Cosmo held out to her. "Well, sir, it didn't seem likely you'd be coming to me, so I just came to see you," she said, taking the chair he offered. "You're gone very thin, Mr. Cosmo. I don't know what they did to you in London town, but now you've come home you ought to be picking up a bit."

"So I am," he answered. "But we're none of us inclined to be fat, you know, at the best of times."

"I know! But your hand used to be as brown and as hard as mine, and now it's like a lady's."

She eyed the young man with motherly solicitude, and with something else behind it, a sort of doubt and shyness, as if she hardly knew how to approach the subject she had come to speak of.

"Well, Nurse Mary, you needn't wonder at that," he said smiling, and wondering what she wanted. "You know I've not long been able to use my right hand at all; it hasn't been much use to me for a month past."

"I dare say not, Mr. Cosmo. I haven't got over yet what I felt when I heard what had happened, and I'm sure it was a sore time for more than me."

"But wasn't it worth it?" he said, as if defending himself against her significant, almost reproving tone. "If I hadn't been there Mrs. Edmund and her little girls mightn't have got out—such dear little girls, Mary! you wouldn't be able to make enough of them if you could see them."

"Very likely, Mr. Cosmo. Now, if it isn't a liberty, can you tell me if Mr. Edmund is fond of his wife and bairns, and if he's good to them?"

"Very fond of them. If it were not for them he would have little enough to make his life worth having. And as good to them as he knows how to be; but I think sometimes, nurse, that no man knows how to be good to a woman."

"Maybe not, Mr. Cosmo. Men want very plain speaking before they can tell what a woman wants; that's certain."

"Just so; and they never get it."

"Well, there's one going to get it now. Mr. Cosmo, I and mine have known you and yours long enough, for I think my folks have been in Ernston pretty near as long as Herons. And if I say to you that Herons were never much like other folks, I'm not telling you anything that you don't know."

"Certainly not; but what then?"

"Why then, let one that loves you as your old nurse does beg and entreat of you not to be like the rest of them. As far as I can make out they could never forget, nor forgive, nor change their minds, nor turn back when once they get started on a wrong road."

"And what wrong road have I started on?"

"Nay, Mr. Cosmo, your father went that way before you. And now he's here, and she's yonder, and God only knows what there is between them,—but I doubt it's more than the seven miles betwixt here and Pennithorne. If those are gentlefolks' ways, to bow and smile, and pay visits and speak civil, and keep a grudge in the heart for eighteen years and more—why, a woman's better off amongst us, where she gets angry words, or even a blow maybe, and then kiss and be friends and all well again."

The pride of the Herons was not of the kind that takes offence at plain speaking, and it had never occurred

to Cosmo that this woman was in any essential his inferior. "I won't pretend not to know what you mean," he answered, speaking very low. "But you are wrong, Mary; there is no grudge in my heart and never was. My wife was free to please herself,—to be with me or away from me."

"Begging your pardon, I can't think that, sir. A woman isn't free to come, even to her own man, unless he asks her,—and asks as if he meant it, too! Maybe you didn't think of that; for I notice that men never seem to understand a woman's pride, though they've got plenty of their own."

"I did not like to press her to come to me, because I had so little to offer her."

"You had plenty to offer her, Mr. Cosmo, if you had but known. Some gentlefolks' ways are beyond me; but when a young lady makes excuse again and again to come and sit in a house like mine, and to set a body like me on talking of nothing but a certain young gentleman, and what he was like when he was a boy, and all he ever did or said that I can call to mind; and when she must keep her pretty eyes turned away for the most part for fear I should see the tears and the shine in them, I don't need to be a witch to know that she'd be glad to go and live with him in a coal-cellar if he wanted her."

There was a long pause. Mrs. Pearson had spoken her mind, and was perhaps a little frightened at her own boldness. She sat silent, rigidly upright, with her hands folded in her lap. If Mr. Cosmo wanted to say anything to her she was there to hear it; but for her own part she had done.

Cosmo lay back in his chair, a little turned away from the failing light of the winter afternoon, so deep

in thought that he almost forgot his visitor's presence. It did not jar upon him, as it would upon some who think themselves not half so proud, that such a woman should speak to him on such a subject; he knew his world and her too well. Nor did it surprise him, for he had been thinking of nothing else ever since Emily had borne her small testimony to the same effect. His mind was free to view this matter in a new light; and it was more completely a new light to him than might have been supposed.

In his boyish simplicity he had asked Althea to be his wife, solely, as he thought, that she might help him in the purpose of his life; and he had been half surprised to find what brightness she had brought into the prospect. When she failed him in that purpose there seemed nothing more that they could have to do with one another; and how was he to know what part disappointed love had played in the general bitterness of disappointment?

Mrs. Pearson smiled to herself a kindly superior little smile when at last he broke silence, obviously unaware of the length of time that had passed since she had spoken. "All that may have been once, Mary. But by your own account I have behaved badly enough to have put an end to it long since."

"As to that, perhaps I oughtn't to speak. With us there is but one kind of behaviour that a woman can't forgive, and you'd never behave to any woman that way, Mr. Cosmo. But ladies may be different, though it's my own belief they're flesh and blood like us. All I know is, you've been married to your wife for less than a year and parted from her for more than nine months; and there's them in the family that might be a warning, after being parted for twice

nine years. A woman can't speak first, be she a lady or a poor girl."

There was another long pause, while Nurse Mary looked straight before her, and the young man stared into the fire. He looked merely very thoughtful, and if he was surprised it was not at Mrs. Pearson's audacity.

"And now, sir," she went on after a moment, "I'll wish you good night, for it's time I was going. And I do hope and trust you'll look better next time I see you."

"You'll have some tea before you go, or I shall be offended," cried the young man, rousing himself and stretching out a hand to the bell. "I've had tea often enough with you."

"And will again, sir, I hope. But mine will be expecting me at home by this time."

"Then they may expect a little longer, or come to meet you if they like."

Evidently his visitor had done Cosmo good. He ordered tea, and did the honours when it came with a briskness that would have rejoiced the Squire's heart. And when Nurse Pearson had declined a third cup, and risen to go, he looked at her half askance, with a laugh in his eyes that had certainly not been there for many a day. "You never gave me such a scolding before since I tumbled through the old greenhouse roof, Mary."

"I doubt I never gave you scoldings enough, sir," she answered, prudently declining to re-open the subject. "But it wasn't your fault if I didn't, for you got into mischief and frightened my heart into my mouth many a time, and you always listened to me patiently after, as you've done this night. So now think on what I've said, and good night, and God bless you, my dear."

It is likely that Cosmo slept rather less than more that night after the

unusual excitements of the day, but he came down next morning looking more like himself than he had done since the accident. Mr. Heron asked himself if this was the result of a little change and stir, and whether he had been to blame in letting his son mope and brood in that quiet old house with no company but his own.

The doubt laid him open to conviction when, in the course of the day, his wife drove up from Pennithorne, to be horrified at Cosmo's looks, and to scold every one for not having done something sooner, and to announce her intention of carrying him off to her house to be properly nursed. It was very pleasant to the Squire to hear his son protest that he was better,—nearly well again—in a very different tone from that which had answered every inquiry to the same effect ever since their return home, and to hear him defend his nurses, collectively and individually, against his mother's aspersions. But Cosmo had his own reasons for not being unwilling to go to Pennithorne, and Mr. Heron for a wonder was anxious that he should go. More than once Cosmo would have asked if Althea were there or were expected, but the words refused to come, and he found himself colouring and hastily asking some other question. Well, at worst he could easily contrive that his mother should desire her to come back, and then—but time would show what then.

The upshot of it all was that Mrs. Heron had her way, and carried her son off with her in the close carriage, making as much fuss over him as she dared, but restrained by the certainty that he would rebel if not allowed what for an invalid seemed an unreasonable amount of liberty. She did not know how spiritlessly he had allowed himself to be tyrannised over

of late, nor was she ever likely now to know, for Cosmo's courage had answered to the touch of the spur, and he had begun to admit the possibility of there being still something to do and to hope for.

It was somewhat of a disappointment on arriving at Pennithorne to find that his mother and he were to be alone there. Mrs. Heron had already written to Althea, desiring her to come back at once, but that was her secret, a surprise that she was preparing for her son. She knew perfectly well that Cosmo was thinking all the while of his wife, trying to lead the conversation round to her, trying to find out incidentally whether she might be expected soon. And Mrs. Heron hugged herself in satisfaction and kept her own counsel. Surely good days were coming for her now! Cosmo had evidently given up his brother, whatever it might have cost him to do so, and she had bound both the young folks to her side by giving Althea a home when she needed it. By degrees she might make them both hers, might teach them to look upon Pennithorne as a second home, might make them dependent upon what she could do for them in the present and on what she could leave them at her death. And to have those she loved dependent upon her was Mrs. Heron's idea of happiness.

In her letter to Althea she had said, what happened to be true at the time, that she was alone. She did not say that she was going that day to bring Cosmo home with her, but implied that she needed a companion to cheer her loneliness. It seemed to her that the surprise would be more effective if it was a surprise for both; and as regards truthfulness Mrs. Heron had often sailed nearer the wind than that.

On the second day came a little note

from Althea which Mrs. Heron was careful that her son should not get a glimpse of, simply promising to come back that day by the train which had been suggested to her, "for a short visit," added in a parenthesis, as if to show that the writer neither expected nor desired that the arrangement should be considered as permanent. "That is for others to settle," said Mrs. Heron to herself with a smile of triumph, and proceeded to ask Cosmo if she could do anything for him in the town. "Are you to be trusted to take care of yourself for three hours or so?" she asked fondly. "Most unfortunately I have to go over to see my dressmaker, and it is too far for you at present."

Cosmo did not press his company on his mother; the word dressmaker acted as a deterrent, as she had meant it should. But he did suggest that it was very cold and looked inclined to snow, and that the important business might wait; to which advice his mother turned a deaf ear. She wanted a little private talk with Althea before husband and wife should meet, and she could not afford to lose the opportunity that the long drive would give her.

So after an early lunch she started "to see her dressmaker," well provided with furs and hot-water tins, and vigorously scolding Cosmo for coming out bareheaded on to the steps to see that she was properly tucked in. But if Mrs. Heron had been looking out of the carriage-window instead of leaning back in the corner revolving her schemes, she might have recognised the face of a man whom she passed in the narrow lane not a quarter of a mile from Pennithorne. He started when he saw who was in the carriage, and hastily turned toward the hedge; but after it had passed by he went on his way towards the house she had just left.

CHAPTER XIX.

Cosmo was sitting in the morning-room, musing and pretending to read, when the butler with rather a troubled face announced: "A gentleman to see you, sir. He said he would prefer not to give his name."

Alas! the gentleman might prefer to go through the world without giving his name; but the man had been in Mrs. Heron's service for years, and knew well who this must be with the unmistakable Heron face. Cosmo also knew,—before he saw—before the butler's portly figure had removed itself from the doorway. He started to his feet, his face growing like an expressionless mask, and so stood, moving not a step forward.

Perhaps the impulse that had brought Edmund so far failed him now, or perhaps he had thought that the moment itself would teach him what to say and do, and now found it lacking in inspiration; for he too stood still and waited, in a pause that grew more terrible every moment.

"I—I am glad to see you so much better," he said at last, as if he would ignore the fact that they had not touched hands or spoken a word of greeting, the fact that he dared not put out a hand that might be refused, and that ordinary greetings had stuck in his throat.

"Thank you," said Cosmo, in exactly the tone which he might have used to a total stranger. "Will you not sit down?"

Edmund came a little nearer, but otherwise took no notice of the invitation, such as it was. "I have come here unasked," he said, "and I suppose unwelcome. I quite understood that you could not see me before you left London. I would not trouble you then; but surely there is something more to be said between you and me?"

He paused ; there was neither assent nor denial upon Cosmo's part, but merely expectant silence. No reproaches, no scorn or invective, could have been so terrible to Edmund as this silent waiting for some excuse or explanation that he had not to give, this tacit assumption that as matters now stood his brother at least could have nothing to say to him. "Cosmo!" he said at last, coming one step nearer, and the word was so like a cry for mercy that it compelled an answer.

"What would you have me say?" asked the other slowly, as if each word cost an effort.

"What you choose! Blame me as you like; say every bitter thing you can think of! Anything is better than silence."

Cosmo's lips moved, but they uttered no word; and his eyes flashed with a meaning that his brother could not read. His features seemed to harden into rigid lines again, and for the first time since their first meeting Edmund realised how terribly like Cosmo was to his father,—this young gracious face that he had learned to love better almost than any other in the world,—to the face that had always been to him that of his stern and unrelenting judge. "Have I sinned past forgiveness?" he cried passionately.

"Not against me," was the answer in the same dull reluctant tone; but he hurried on, unheeding.

"I am willing to make atonement. I see now that I ought not to have deceived you, though I thought once that a man with all the world against him was justified in securing an ally by any means. But you were the only ally I wanted,—only you; my heart yearned after some one who was of my own flesh and blood, who might know nearly all and yet would care for me. Was it strange that I did not tell you all? Did I ever make it

a secret that interest as well as love was at the bottom of it; that I wanted your help in my sore strait? If I had not loved you far better than ever I looked for, I would never have told you what would set you free from all obligation to me. My father and mother are both under oath to me to tell no living soul, on consideration of my agreeing to cut off the entail; and whether he had driven me to that or no, I could always have been a thorn in his side while I kept my hold over you."

"Am I to thank you for having spoken the truth,—such truth—at last? The—lies you told me first were more merciful; but I cannot thank you for those."

"I said something at the beginning of my confession which you put aside at the time. I think you can hardly have remembered it since, or given sufficient importance to it. I meant it for unconditional surrender, and I mean it still. I will] do what my father wishes; let him triumph over my defeat. I will sign the papers, which I believe he has had waiting for me nine years and more, and resign my place in the entail. As to any allowance, and the rest of it, I will do as you and he wish; I will make no claim. And you will be master at the Edge, and reign there after my father long and happily I hope; so to have had a scapegrace brother will not have been in your case an unmixed evil."

Cosmo had laid his hand on the back of the chair by which he was standing, and now leaned a little forward, as if the dim light of the winter afternoon, darkening as it was to snow, did not suffer him to read Edmund's face as he would have wished. One would have said that a sort of surprise had come into his own, except that surprise is generally a softener of the expression, and his

did not soften one whit. "And that is really what you think?" he said, in a guarded musing tone through which the passion broke like fire as he went on. "You could think like that, and I could live so near to you for a year and more and not find you out? Truly I was a blind fool, and you may well take credit for having been kind enough to enlighten me at last!—Atonement? I will tell you the only atonement you could make. If you could persuade me that of the whole tissue of lies that confession of yours had been the greatest: if you could pledge your honour—*your* honour, good God! it is *our* honour, and you have dragged it in the dust!—if you could by any means make me believe that you had never done this thing! You say that no one but yourself could have told me. You were safe enough; for if any one had said and sworn it, I would not have believed them. That having done it you should stand there and offer me estate and position to make all right is not perhaps so strange as it seems."

He turned away, as if he would have left the room, but dropped into the chair instead and sat still, locking his hands together to hide how they trembled. He had not looked at his brother's face as he spoke, but if he had he would have seen a change in it,—have seen it gather a horror and surprise as of one who sees a vision, before which the thing that he has done takes shape at last and shows itself for what it is,—a ghost never to be laid again.

"Is that all you have to say to me?" asked Edmund, after a moment.

"All,—and too much!" answered Cosmo, resting his arms on the back of the chair and his face upon them.

"Good Heavens, why should you torture us both by forcing me to speak?"

"Well, I have one thing more to say. I am sorry, but you must have

patience with me; it will soon be over. I came up here to see my father, to signify to him that I was willing at last to fall in with his wishes. I had less courage to meet him for that purpose than I have often had to defy him,—but no matter. I heard that you were here, and came round here first, hoping that you would go with me to him,—hoping for—no matter what!" He paused an instant, but Cosmo neither spoke nor moved; and Edmund's face began to show that even its mobile lines could harden into a look of desperate resolve. "I did not understand that I had sinned past redemption. That was part of my moral density, I suppose; but I quite understand it now. Well, there is one way of wiping off all scores. I had thought of it before, even prepared for it; but one does not take that way except as a last resource. Now it is plain enough and easy enough! I am going, Cosmo. Do you care to say good-bye to me?"

Does real despair ever talk for effect? Perhaps, so complex a thing is man. But it is hard to do so in the presence of a despair more simple and absolute, with righteous wrath to back it; hard to protest to deaf ears, and a face turned away, and a head bowed down as if its owner would never care to lift it up again.

Edmund stopped abruptly, though perhaps he had not said all he had meant to say; but Cosmo moved no more than if he had been turned to stone. He was fighting out a battle in his own heart that made him deaf and blind, and though Edmund's words reached his brain and were registered there, he was not thinking of them any more than if they had gone unheard.

For a moment Edmund stood looking at him, then turned away with that unconscious gesture of the hands with which men fling away a hope

that is crushed and dead. He moved to the window, which was a French one opening to the ground, and slid back the bolt, deftly and noiselessly. "Never mind," he said. "There is but one thing I can do for you all, and I think you may trust me now to do it. Good-bye, and God bless you for ever and a day."

The window creaked as he opened it. Cosmo lifted his head with a dazed, bewildered look, to see Edmund standing there, looking back with a strange smile on his lips, while his hand was feeling after something in his breast. The next instant he had closed the window behind him, passed swiftly along the terrace, and round the corner of the house, and was out of sight.

Some men seem to live all their lives in a blindness that is half wilful and half natural; aware that their standard of morality is not the highest in the world, but comfortably certain also that it is not the lowest, and that so long as a man refrains from "sins he has no mind to" he has a right to a certain amount of self-respect. But surely these must have moments of clearer vision, albeit fruitless and never confessed, when they see themselves for what they are, and their lives as they have made them, in sharp, black contrast to the lives that might have been. When such an hour comes to a man, with circumstance to give it poignancy and drive it home, may it not account for such a story as we see often enough in the newspapers, when the suicide of some apparently prosperous citizen is detailed with the sage comment of the reporter that "no motive can be assigned for the rash act"? No motive! Well, none perhaps that the scribe would comprehend; and happily after all, hope that springs eternal, and physical cowardice which

is nearly as ineradicable, and a thousand loves and fears and natural ties, usually hold men back from taking the one step that cannot be retraced, and so the dark moment passes by.

It was on Edmund Heron now, and was not likely soon to pass.

For a man who came of honourable blood he had gone through life singularly unshackled by what some people call prejudices and others principles. He would never have made a great criminal, because he was naturally kind-hearted and gentle and debonair, and would far rather have done good than harm to his neighbours. But he had never had any great respect for verbal accuracy; and to convey money from the pockets of the rich into those of the poor had seemed to him a good deed that might well be performed in any convenient manner. He would not willingly have robbed a poor man; and it had weighed upon him more when he had been compelled to keep some poor tradesman waiting for payment than when he had committed a double forgery and robbed his mother. He was aware of that, and the impression it had left with him was that he was really an honest man, and that only exceptional circumstances were to blame for the pass to which he had brought himself. When he looked forward to the birth of the son who was to make all well for them, he had really felt as though he could hand on to the boy an unstained name, so long as the unsympathetic world knew nothing of what he had done. He had no personal shame, and when he bargained with his father for secrecy it seemed to him that it was for fear of being misjudged, not dread of being known for what he was.

But perhaps Edmund was not so blind as he would have made himself; perhaps the instincts of an honourable nature were not utterly wanting, only

thrust aside and overlaid. If he could not speak the truth, he could love; and love is the revealing as well as the fulfilling of the law, giving the power of seeing with another man's eyes and feeling with his heart. Edmund had always been fond of his younger brother; he had no want of kindness to reproach himself with in their brief intercourse before he left his home for ever. Even the open partiality of both parents had not stirred up any jealousy in his sweet nature; when he sought out Cosmo again it had been in home-sick yearning after some natural tie as well as in scheming for his own interest. It was only characteristic of the man that he could cheat his brother and at the same time love him sincerely, trading upon his generous credulity and admiring it with unremorseful ardour; could drag him into poverty and untold difficulties, regarding him all the while with pitying tenderness instead of that hatred we generally feel for those whom we have injured.

But the end of all that had come. Nemesis had arrived by her own circuitous but unfailing route. He had loved his brother till he had even begun to see things from Cosmo's point of view; and now at last, as he realised what his confession meant to the other, he saw the thing that he had done as Cosmo saw it, in all its naked hideousness.

He had had his dark hours before, when he all but scorned himself; when life seemed not worth having, a lost battle to which one could but choose a speedy end. A man of such a temperament, who has often brought himself to a seemingly hopeless pass, does not arrive at Edmund's time of life without having contemplated more than once the last resource of beaten men; without having at least played wit the idea of escaping from all difficulties into a region where at least the

same weary old problems cannot follow. But hitherto he had only played with the idea. His moods were none of them of long duration; never till now had he been bankrupt in love and honour and in self-respect; never had he felt quite sure that hope had said good-bye for ever.

Once, since Cosmo and his father had left London, after a visit and an ultimatum from Mr. Walsh, despair had so far got the upper hand with him that he had provided himself with the means to accomplish that to which he told himself he might be driven. He told himself too, in all honesty, that every one would be better without him; even Margaret and the children, since his mother would look to them when he was out of the way, and Cosmo would never allow them to suffer. But he waited, and presently, as time softened his recollection of their meeting in the hospital, he took a longing to see Cosmo again, to reiterate the offer that he thought his brother had perhaps overlooked and forgotten, to prove his repentance by a free surrender of all that he could give up. He had imagined how Cosmo would take this proof of his sincerity, and perhaps entreat him not to ruin himself after all. Sometimes he thought that he would see his father first and get it over, and be able to tell his brother that it was an accomplished fact. But when, inquiring how things were at a cottage on his way, Edmund found that Cosmo was gone down to Pennithorne, his courage suddenly failed him. The sort of shamelessness with which he used to face his father's stern condemnatory eyes had gone, and seemed to have left him naked and open to the other's scorn. He said to himself that he must see Cosmo first and possibly they might go together; at any rate he would have pledged himself and so gained a little courage.

Well, he had seen Cosmo, and had gained no courage but the courage of despair, and that beckoned a different way. No, he would not see his father, to offer an unavailing repentance to his scorn, and learn once more that his offer of atonement was only another offence. The other way was easier far and more effectual; and happily that door was open.

Edmund knew the country round Pennithorne well, and when he left the house his purpose seemed of itself to guide his feet, though he walked on blindly.

He had set out as if to go to Herne's Edge, but when he reached the parting of the ways he took the short cut that led across the moor. The track was four or five feet deep in snow where the wind had drifted it, and everywhere untrodden, for few came here from year's end to year's end but half-wild sheep and grouse and crested plover.

Edmund remembered well how, when he was a boy, an old man had lost his way up there in a November storm and been heard of no more until the keeper's dogs, ranging the heather one breezy day in March, came upon a heap of bones beside a great gray stone. A shorter time than that would make it impossible to say whether anything more deadly than frost and snow had lulled a tired wanderer to a sleep that had known no waking. It was a good plan, better than any that could have come to him in the turmoil of the London streets. After all, these snow-clad wilds were home; the look of them was interwoven with every fibre of his heart, and it was good to come home to them to die.

He quickened his pace as he climbed the long rough lane and came out at last on to the open moor. The loneliest cottage was left far behind now, and he knew where the track lay,

though it was hidden so completely. He had only to follow it a little way, then strike off to the left over the rolling upland, and beyond it he would find a solitude as of a world yet unmade, and projecting through the drifts such a gray rock as that he had in his mind's eye, beside which the old pedlar had found a night's shelter and a five months' grave.

CHAPTER XX.

On the same day on which Edmund left London, another train by another line was bearing Geoffrey Pierce back to the world from which he had been absent so long,—a world which was emphatically the only one for him, and so different from that region to which Edmund was returning that it might well have belonged to another century or a different planet.

Geoffrey had had his own worries of late, and perhaps had found less time to think of Edmund than had ever been the case for many years. During the last few weeks he had been surrounded by a coterie of uncongenial relations, and carried back, as it were, into his repressed unhappy boyhood; blamed for what was no fault of his, disapproved of for following the bent of his own nature, treated altogether as a returning but unpentant prodigal.

It was over now at any rate, this hopeless attempt to put back the clock and return to a time that had never been happy or profitable; a time when he and they had both missed opportunities that could not be given back, as they seemed to think, by the mere fact of being together again. Death, the great reconciler, had stepped between, making a renewal of love or a bitterer quarrel alike impossible; and had left him, with a heart half sore and half satisfied, to contemplate his life from a somewhat different standpoint.

When a man has known for years that the "modest competence" which must one day be his may not come till he himself is old, the chances are that he will have spoken little of his expectations and have thought of them no more than he could help,—that is, if he be such a man as Geoffrey Pierce. Nevertheless such a possibility affords just a little foundation for those castles which Fancy must build now and then, and makes the airy edifices a shade more substantial than they would otherwise be. Geoffrey could think of the time when his ship would come home with a little more expectation of the vessel's arrival than most men have, and he had not therefore been able to avoid sometimes picturing to himself what he should do when it was actually in port.

Many visions had taken shape before his half dreaming eyes in the rare moments when he let his mind wander from the hard realities of the present, but never this that actually came to pass. He was young still: he had a career before him; and now that he was no longer obliged to write for bread he might write for a name and a place in the world and incidentally earn more than when money was of the first importance to him; so true is it that "to him that hath shall more be given." And above and beyond all, the beautiful face of Evelyn Armitage smiled a distant proud encouragement like that of a tourney queen. "I am not for beaten men," it said. "I sit here for him who can win me; and I can wait."

This was something quite unlooked for, this hope that until lately had been more like a beautiful despair; but none the less it was now a reality, to be reckoned with among the other and harder realities of life. Fate had brought them together, after years that somehow had left them both somewhat lonely. By one bold step

he had brought himself into intimate relations with her; and he had no reason to think that she liked him the less for having done so. Now an unlooked for turn of the wheel had placed him in a position in which it was not madness to hope one day to win her. Add to this that circumstances had given him a hint that at least she liked no one else too well, and a man must be less than a man who could not do the rest for himself. Geoffrey Pierce was not usually too sanguine, but in his mind's eye he saw each blissful step of the road he hoped to travel, as well as the goal to which it was to lead him.

So thinking or dreaming he arrived in Burton Road, to find Edmund gone, and Margaret more anxious and depressed on his account than she was willing to show or could easily hide from him.

Geoffrey Pierce had never been able to get on very far with Margaret, as two people will sometimes fail to get on for no reason that could be assigned by either. He had begun by treating her with punctilious courtesy just because he understood that she was not quite of her husband's rank in life, and owing to shyness on both sides they had never come to be on any easier footing. Geoffrey had been too much repressed all his life to find it easy to make advances, and Margaret on her part was afraid of him. Perhaps she had reason, of an unconscious, unreasoning kind; for a man who has been disappointed in the friend of his heart always finds it hard not to blame the woman that friend has married. Geoffrey quite acquitted Margaret of any shortcoming that might have been in her own power to remedy; he acknowledged her patience, her gentleness and unselfishness, and pitied her more than he could express. But he could not help thinking that

if Edmund had married a woman who was more his equal,—a woman perhaps less patient and loving and devoted, but who would have expected more of him, and even possibly have been able to compel him to live always at his highest level, the story of his life might have been very different.

He did not really sympathise on this occasion with Margaret's vague uneasiness. Having elicited that Edmund was gone to his home and had said little or nothing to his wife of his intentions or hopes in doing so, Geoffrey somewhat hastily concluded that this might mean a reconciliation, and so dismissed the matter from his thoughts.

He had plenty to do after his long absence, and had calculated on getting into harness immediately on his arrival. But after unpacking his scanty luggage, he could do no more than stroll restlessly out again, deluding himself with the idea that he must see some one on business. This business however only took him by train to the West End, and thence into Kensington Gardens.

Geoffrey Pierce no longer attempted to disguise from himself the fact that he was going, like any love-sick boy, to feast his eyes on the house where *she* lived. He had no intention of calling upon her or Mrs. Ingleby; he was not yet sufficiently accustomed to his new hopes to wish to meet her, unless by accident. But those hopes seemed to have put "a spirit in his feet" that drew him nearer to her, as it were involuntarily; they showed him the whole world in a new and transfiguring light, wherein that threshold where he had seen her once and might hope to see her again seemed a place to seek in devout pilgrimage.

The afternoon was very dark, even for London and winter. It might have been December rather than Feb-

ruary, and a kind of smoky mist lay under those arcades of leafless branches that as yet showed no sign of the turn of the year. It was not St. Valentine's Day, and if it had been, under that grim gray sky the most sanguine bird would not have been minded to go a-wooing.

Geoffrey was just thinking, with unwonted cheeriness, that the sour looks of the weather made no difference to him, or rather made his thoughts brighter by contrast; when suddenly he stopped short, half turned upon his heel, and glanced back along the way by which he had just come, like one who remembers something or hears a voice call his name. He had heard nothing, remembered nothing; his muscles seemed to have arrested their action of their own accord, as they do sometimes when the senses telegraph to them something of which the brain has not as yet had time to take cognizance. He waited a moment, as if for some sound to be repeated, or as if to grasp the significance of something already heard; then sharply asked himself why he was standing there like a fool. But in his heart he knew why—knew that a sudden intimation had come to him, something in himself and yet apart from himself, clear and unmistakable as a voice that spoke. "Edmund wants you," it said; "and you are leaving him. After all these years, in his sorest need, you are going your own way and leaving him to shift for himself."

After that one indignant question to himself Geoffrey faced about again and went on, but more slowly. As is always the case in such circumstances the impression grew weaker as he thought about it; as though he had heard a friend's voice hailing him, and then,—looking round and seeing no one, and the call not being repeated—had naturally begun to think that

his ears had played him false. Nevertheless, so strong had been the impression that if Edmund had been at Burton Road, or anywhere in London, Geoffrey would have gone to him at once, even while abusing himself for so doing.

But Edmund was more than a hundred and fifty miles away, and presumably safe with his father and brother who were wellable to look after him. And this was London and the nineteenth century, in which supernatural intimations seemed at least improbable and out of place. Somehow the muffled roar of wheels from beyond the leafless trees greatly helped Geoffrey to call himself a superstitious fool and to school himself to walk on as if nothing had happened. After all, what had happened? After having had Edmund and his affairs on his mind for years, some trick of memory had brought back the old feeling of responsibility which had so often made him needlessly unhappy, and which just now he had felt inclined to throw off for ever. That was all; and yet the whole look of the world had changed. Geoffrey walked on very soberly while the winter sky darkened all round the great city with snow that could not resolve to fall. He began to ask himself what reason he had for supposing that Edmund had gone north with any hope of being reconciled to his father. Now he came to consider it, he had none; and Margaret, who certainly ought to know more about the matter, plainly had no such expectation. But if he could make no better terms with his father, and if the grim old tyrant had, as it appeared, taken possession of Cosmo, what was to become of Edmund? It was strange that the problem always presented itself in that form to Geoffrey, while to Edmund's brother it chiefly occurred to ask himself what was to become of

Margaret and the children; and yet Geoffrey knew Edmund's faults, all but one, better than Cosmo did.

He had heard nothing from Edmund of late, since one brief note in which he announced the birth and death of the little son; a note that had struck Geoffrey at the time as being wonderfully composed, but which he now began to understand otherwise and to read a breaking heart between the lines.

"There is nothing more that any man can do for Edmund," he said to himself presently, as if arguing the case with some one to whose side of the question he had been listening patiently. "I have given him, ever since I knew him, my time and thoughts, my career, all that I had to give; and what has he been the better for it? I have done for him what necessity might perhaps have driven him to do for himself; and for that I dare say he has been actually the worse. Is it not time that I took my own life for myself, and tasted a little comfort and happiness after as dreary a youth as ever fell to any man's lot? He is proud enough in his way; he would never contrast my happiness with his misery, or reproach me for having deserted him. I should be free from reproaches, unless I were fool enough to reproach myself. Some men would deceive themselves with the idea that they could still befriend him, but I will at least face facts. All that I could do for him, even in my present circumstances, would be little enough; and if I marry and leave Bohemia I must leave him behind for ever. *He that is married careth for the things of the world how he may please his wife*; and the woman does not live who would tolerate such a friend for her husband as Edmund has been to me. He will never have any money; he will never have any luck; and no one else will ever keep

even as much of a hold over him as I have kept. But I owe him nothing, God knows! It is a question rather of the long debt I owe myself; and having stood between him and ruin for all these years is no reason for continuing to do so to the end of the chapter."

Slowly as Geoffrey Pierce had been walking since he fell so deeply into thought, he had crossed the Gardens at last and traversed almost by instinct two or three streets beyond. He was in the street now where Mrs. Ingleby lived, but somehow his desire to pass her door had waned, though it was none the less a sacred locality to his thoughts. He had wished to see it before in hope, he might wish to see it many a time in a kind of despair, but not now. And yet he moved onward, spiritlessly and for lack of determination enough to turn back, till just before he reached the door a light firm step came down the street and overtook him. Before he turned he knew well who it was, and hardly knew whether to bless or curse the fate that had given him more than he desired.

"It is a long time since I saw you," said Evelyn Armitage as their hands met. "I thought you would have come to bring me news of our—friends."

"I have been away," he answered. "A relation of mine, my stepfather, was dying and sent for me to go to him. His illness lasted longer than was expected; but he died last week, and to-day I came back to town."

"You have had a sad time then lately; I am sorry."

"Yes, sad enough. And all the sadder, if you can understand what I mean, because I had not more to lose, because he and I had not been on very good terms with one another."

"I think I understand you. And

you must have been anxious too about—your friends."

For the second time a shade of hesitation in her speech made Geoffrey glance keenly at her for an instant. "Yes, I have been anxious too; and I have not been favoured with many letters. Did you see Cosmo before he went home?"

"No; his father carried him away as soon as ever he was fit to travel. I was going to ask if you knew how he was."

"I have heard nothing lately. Of course he could not use his right hand for a good while. His father wrote once at his dictation, but since they got home I have heard nothing. And now Edmund is away,—gone north too—and I cannot make out that he had had any very recent accounts."

They were standing now on the pavement just before Mrs. Ingleby's house, and Miss Armitage looked before and behind her before she spoke again. "Do you know if Mr. Edmund Heron has gone to be reconciled to his father or mother, or both?"

"I don't know; I fear not." Geoffrey hardly knew how he came to speak so decidedly, since he had left home that afternoon with the idea that such a reconciliation might be probable enough. But he spoke out of a present firm conviction.

"I wish he could! It seems to me that that would be the only way out of the difficulty for—anybody. Can no one do anything to bring that queer disunited family together again?"

"I don't know," said Geoffrey again. "I have never dared to try. I have never known any of them but Edmund, and latterly Cosmo; but I fancy none of them are like other people."

"And Cosmo has gone home! Has he given up and grown tired of trying? That doesn't seem quite like him."

Geoffrey bit his lip and did not answer. It was not like Cosmo, and there must be some reason for it; but what that reason was he dared not think. Looking up he met Miss Armitage's keen kindly eyes with the wistful doglike appeal of his own, and the mutual look was longer than either knew.

Three things were suddenly clear to him, though he could have given reasons for none of the three. The first, that Miss Armitage was interested in him, as well as in the Herons, —nothing much, a mere touch, a shade of feeling, but enough for an ardent, hopeful love to have built upon. The second, that there was something more wrong in Edmund's affairs than he had ever known, that Cosmo knew it and had given his brother up, and that none of his own people would ever do anything more for him. And the third, that Geoffrey Pierce would never give him up, would not or could not, it was all the same. No new call of love could drown the old voice; nothing could reconcile him to his own safe path while the gulping quicksand closed over his friend's head.

"Will you not come in and see Mrs. Ingleby?" Evelyn was saying; and with a start he seemed to come back out of a dream to answer her. "I think not, thank you. I—must say good-bye." He held out his hand, and when she laid hers in it he detained it in his grasp for a moment, while he seemed to be searching for words that were hard to find. "Our acquaintance has been very brief, Miss Armitage, and I think,—I have a kind of presentiment that we may not often meet again. I think you have been generous enough to forgive my bold interference; will you be kind enough also to try not to forget one who can never forget you?"

Evelyn laughed a little nervously.

"Since I don't know why we should not meet again, you must forgive me if I am unsympathetic enough to wonder what good my remembrance can do you."

"You may know, if you will. There are some thoughts and feelings so hopeless and useless that they are better not put into words; but they still claim some recognition. As for meeting again,—if I am wrong, and our paths in life do not lie too far apart—so much the better for me! But good-bye now, at least; and as much as that word can convey I mean."

"I prefer to say *au revoir*," she answered, with a somewhat forced lightness, and so turned smiling away. Geoffrey watched her mount the steps, and the door close behind her, before he went on his way. He was feeling, as men often do after talking to the woman they most desire to please, that he had made a fool of himself,—longing to have the conversation over again, to take back all that he had said, or to say it otherwise.

And then he suddenly bethought himself that it was not of the slightest consequence after all; that, pleased or not pleased, he was going to let this woman pass out of his life for ever, because there was not room in it for friendship and for love. Friendship had been there long before Love knocked at the door; and no one knew if he sighed as he shut the door on Love's winsome face and turned the key in the lock.

It was late that night before Geoffrey Pierce reached home. He had walked many miles in pure aimlessness, not caring, and hardly knowing, where he went. But as he sauntered along within hearing of the roar of the Strand, the name of a street caught his eye, and he paused a moment to consider why it seemed familiar, what

association it had for him. In a moment more he remembered. At a certain number, on a certain floor in that street, Mr. Henry Walsh was to be found, when he was visible anywhere. And with that Geoffrey began to wonder whether Mr. Walsh might have anything to do with Edmund's visit to the north, and with the crisis that he could not help feeling had arrived in his friend's affairs.

He was still in that exalted mood when men come to swift decisions, when they snap the thousand and one slender threads that ordinarily hold us back from prompt speech and action. "I will see if I can find him," he said to himself. "If I can, I will take it for a sign. I am in a position now to treat with him, and to save Edmund from this danger at least. And if I regret it afterwards, I shall not be able to go back,—as Cosmo said when I urged him not to make a fool of himself."

Mr. Walsh was to be found in a curious little bare room, elaborately arranged to look as though a great deal of business was done in it. He and Geoffrey eyed each other as men do who take a great interest in each other without either mutual liking or respect.

"You sell a great many things, I believe," began Geoffrey abruptly; "stocks, and shares, and notes of hand, and so forth. Now, I want you to sell me something that many people would regard as of no value,—your character."

"It is of great value to me," said Mr. Walsh, apparently no more surprised than if he had been in the habit of receiving such a proposal every day.

"Well, of some value, no doubt, and therefore I propose to trade. I know well enough that you have some hold on my friend, Edmund Heron,—

some hold, I mean, beyond the bill of sale which he has given you on his furniture. I know that whenever he has had any money you have come down upon him, and obliged him to join you in speculations that have never brought him in anything, whatever they may have done for you. Now, I am prepared to pay off the bill of sale, and to settle any other accounts that Edmund may have with you. But before doing so I want some guarantee that you will set him at liberty when I have paid his ransom."

"You may have my word, if it seems worth my while to give it you," said the other calmly.

"Possibly; but let us talk business. I must have more than your bare word before I make myself responsible for Edmund's liabilities. I must know the whole affair from beginning to end, that I may hold the same weapon over you that you hold over him."

"You had better ask Edmund Heron to give you his account of the matter."

"No; I want more than he could tell me. You need not fear my using my power unless I am compelled to do so. I fully understand that I cannot ruin you without your doing your worst against Edmund; and I am prepared to show you how keen I am to save him from exposure. Only,—I would see him exposed, or in jail, sooner than go on as things are now! You see now how we stand. Name your price for putting yourself in my power, and if possible I will pay it. If you decline, I will advise Edmund to defy you. I believe he will take my advice as things are now with him; and all you will get will be the proceeds of the sale of his furniture."

There was a pause, while Mr. Walsh eyed his visitor in deep and serious thought. There are villains in the

world who overreach themselves because they do not know an honest man when they see one; because they do not know when it would be to their advantage to trust another's word,—or rather because they are morally incapable of trust. Mr. Walsh was not of that order. He had intellect enough to realise that there were men who would do what he would not have done himself, who held themselves bound by pledges that he would have quietly disregarded. It was rather as a matter of form that he said: "And what guarantee have I that you will pay the price agreed upon when you have got the information?"

"None whatever,—but my word, if you like to take that," said Geoffrey Pierce grimly. Mr. Walsh smiled slightly, and seemed once more to muse.

At last he rose, and taking out of the recesses of a large *escritoire* a small bundle of papers, drew a chair to Geoffrey Pierce's side and began to give a succinct and apparently candid account of his connection and dealings with Edmund from the time of their first acquaintance. It was a long and tangled record, a monument of folly upon Edmund's part, and upon Mr. Walsh's part of folly more acute and self-seeking but hardly less foolish. Mr. Walsh was not so good a man of business as he thought himself, and there was some truth in his representation that the shady transactions in which they had been involved had been forced upon him by circumstances before he forced them upon Edmund Heron.

Far into the evening Geoffrey Pierce

sat with him, reading, making notes, hearing explanations, arranging the terms of their compact. When at last the bargain was concluded, Geoffrey was some hundreds of pounds the poorer; but Mr. Walsh was to a great extent in his power, and Edmund was a free man. By way of security for future good behaviour Mr. Walsh placed in his visitor's hands, with cynical indifference, proofs of a most discreditable transaction of three years before; and Geoffrey, with a sort of wonder at himself, made the first use of his new riches. They were not great riches, and this was not the use he had thought to make of them; but he did not regret. A man, as he had said once, must pay for his fancy, and a fancy for constancy can never be indulged for nothing.

"What a night it is!" he said to himself with a shudder, as he came out at last into the street, into the howling wind and driving snow that had almost emptied the streets. "I wonder if Edmund was thinking of coming back to-night?"

With the thought of Edmund and his home he seemed to see for a moment that country of which he had so often heard the brothers speak—the wild bare uplands, white with snow and black with midnight, echoing in their hollows the fury of the winter wind. But his fancy showed him no human figure in all that bleak expanse; and with another shiver he brought back his thoughts to the Strand, which by comparison looked quite light and cheerful; and so, hailing a hansom, he drove home to Burton Road.

(To be continued.)

WHEN WE WERE BOYS.

II.

WHEN we were boys we used to find that each season of the year was defined by its appropriate pursuits and duties just as clearly as if we had been farmers.

In the spring a boy's time is so occupied with bird-nesting in all its branches, such as finding the nests, climbing the trees, taking the nestlings, blowing the eggs and classifying them, that he is left little leisure for other things. In the high summer he will be occupied in pursuing—whether it be butterflies with a net, or, failing that, a cap, or the immature fledglings of the year, escaped from the nests which he has spared, and giving him reasonable hopes of a successful issue to expeditions with catapult or other missile engines. The long autumn evenings will be his opportunity for practising his taxidermy, for skinning and stuffing the birds which have lately fallen to his snares or weapons.

Surely a very special providence watches over the boy, and above all over the boy who occupies his business with bird-stuffing. In the first place, and before more subtle dangers come to be enumerated, he will of necessity have to work with a very sharp cutting tool. If one spoke of the knife, with which we skinned our birds, by that monosyllabic name we were virtuously indignant; it was a *scalpel*. Then, if a boy escaped the risk of lockjaw, or other serious results of a cut from the knife when it was clean, by how many times was his danger from incisions multiplied when that

knife had become encrusted with the blood of a succession of victims, cleaned from it according to a boy's idea of cleansing? And if the operator were miraculously preserved, and survived this danger from the microbes of decomposition, there remained the yet more positive peril incurred in the handling of the poisons which must necessarily be used in curing the skins. At the first, it is true, we had to do all our curing with pepper and camphor; poisons were strictly prohibited. Once, in a pepper famine, we tried salt as an alternative. It was to a starling's skin that we applied it; that starling's skin kept moist, as the day it was stripped, all through the summer and to the following winter, when we threw it away; if any fragment of it be yet in existence we are morally certain that it is moist still. Salt is useless. Pepper, on the other hand, if it be well rubbed in, is good for a long while; but in the end its effect wears off and the moth will corrupt the skin notwithstanding. After a month or two of the practice of taxidermy with the assistance of pepper, the vigilance of the authorities began to tire, and we began with poisons in the shape of corrosive sublimate. We do not recommend it; it is so liquid that its use is attended with inconvenience. Arsenical soap is far better for a boy; it does not spill, and if a thing can be spilled, a boy with spill it.

As good luck would have it, our house was far larger than our needs; so when once we had settled on a scantily furnished room down a little

used passage, and had made it our own by garnishing it with the skins of the birds and the peculiar flavour of taxidermy and preservatives, no one cared to dispute such an excellent title. It was left in our undisturbed possession, scarcely troubled even by a housemaid. Indeed we had so far won over the housemaid whose duty it was to keep this room in the order which is duty's ideal, that far from combating our messes she even aided and abetted them by bringing us raw meat from the kitchen for the young birds, or hard-boiled eggs to chop up for those who needed more delicate diet. This room was a perpetual joy, for here we could keep all the live creatures and dead trophies banished by Authority from our bedroom, such as the skins of the bigger birds, which boyish fingers had not scraped with sufficient care in the nooks and crannies—rather gruesome objects, in the eye of any but a boy, but which, according to his verdict "will be all right in a day or two, when they have dried." These tyrannical Authority, acting on a specious plea of regard for health, forbade from remaining in a bed-chamber. The same Power, on a similar plea, fixed a limit to the number of live birds which were permitted to share the bed-chamber of boyhood. It was necessary that sundry of them should be consigned at nightfall, in company with the uncertain skins, to the less honourable room on the ground floor. Here, too, lived a family of white mice, in constant apprehensions at the spasmodic movements of a young thrush who, piping juvenily and fed from time to time on oatmeal, inhabited a wicker cage at their side. From a packing-case, on the floor, fronted with lathes nailed so as to leave inch-wide interstices, two young jackdaws said "Jack!" all day long and most of the night; an exclamation only to be

appeased by oatmeal thrust so far down the gaping throat that there seemed a danger of the finger being lost irrecoverably. Unvaried oatmeal was the food of the nursing jackdaw, which perhaps accounts for the monotony of its note; whereas the thrush's food might from time to time, on Joe's permission (Joe was the coachman's boy), be relieved by small junks of raw meat. There is a comfort, however, about the solid merit of a jackdaw which contrasts favourably with the more pretentious manners of the young thrush. The jackdaw sits and says "Jack," and does not pretend to say anything else, consumes its simple food with gratitude, and is contented with one perch through a whole summer's day. We used to put them out in a great elm tree by the gate of the stable-yard, and there they would sit all through the afternoon in perfect happiness. The young thrushes were always restless, dissatisfied, their tails draggily, jumping about as if they had hysterics, pining, getting caught by cats,—a perpetual thorn in a boy's flesh. There is nothing so analogous to the care of them, in the experience of later life, as colouring a meerscham pipe. Moreover the rearing of a songster is a constant tax on a boy's faith. Its infantile notes give little promise, and he has to believe that this creature which constantly declines its food, which has to be tempted and cherished like a *malade imaginaire*, will reward all these cares by glorious song in the ensuing spring. But the jackdaw makes him no promises, raises no false hopes, begins on the note which will last him all his life through for expressing his gladness in living and the joy of oatmeal.

It was neither in the garden nor in the wood that we found our jackdaws. When one has left the low-lying marshy house of the moor-hen, and the lane with its crumbly wall beloved of the

blue-tits, one may proceed to climb up through the alternate shades and sunshines of the wood which was our great bird-nesting preserve. The wood-argus will flit before us across the sunlit spaces, the fritillary glance over the flashing bracken, and finally we may arrive panting and perspiring at the head of the hill-side. Here is a bank, with a wonderful tangle of bramble and honeysuckle over which the bees are humming and the little blue butterflies coming and going, like gems, from the field of lucerne beyond it. But when one climbs up the gap in the bank one looks forth over a scene which at once takes the eye from all the nearer objects. At two miles' distance twinkle the waves of the Bristol Channel, and the bay over which Mrs. Leigh looked so long for the coming of the good ship *Rose*. The cliffs on which the waves of that sea thundered were the jackdaws' home; they were two miles from our home, and every bush and every turn of the road in that two mile ramble was full of its own associations. At the angle of the lane which led from our house to the high road a little stream creeps out on to the great thoroughfare, moist even in the driest weather. Once, in a dry spring, peeping cautiously round the corner, we had seen a little covey of house-martins settled in the oozy mud which that tiny rivulet afforded, an oasis in the midst of surrounding dryness. They were busy collecting mud for the nests which they built beneath the eaves. We stole back, for a stone; the martins saw the quick movement of the arm, and rose as the stone came to them, but it glanced from the ground at an angle beyond the calculation of any house-martin, and, on its ricochet, caught one of the birds from beneath. It fell dead, and we rushed out in triumph to secure it, with a joy which no rocketing pheasant, cleanly killed,

can bring to a grown sportsman's heart. It was so beautiful with its dark steel-blue back and snowy patch over the tail and white under parts! Then the way led on past the home of a great friend of ours who owned a single-barrelled gun, and under the shade of great elm trees, where once, for a whole summer, we had been in the habit of seeing a chaffinch with three or four white feathers in his tail, but had never been able to secure him. Thereafter the road led off to the left, and we were soon on high ground, whence we could see the sea sparkling on our right, and where we scarcely ever failed to put up a yellow-hammer whose habit was to go on along the hedge before us in a succession of short flights, perching continually on the top of some low bush, and sending to us his plaintive song on two notes. We could rely on him to furnish us sport in this fashion for a quarter of a mile of our road; then he would tire of our persecutions and turn back, low-flying, towards the place from which we had started him. Thence the way began to bend downwards. We had left all houses behind us, and went between steep gorse-clad banks with little in them that made sport for us. Occasionally we would see a wren creeping so close in the thick golden-blossomed bushes as to be almost invisible; or a yellow-hammer would perch on their tops, utter his notes once, and then away whither we did not care to follow him through the prickly thicket; or a thrush would rise from grubbing at the foot of a bush and elude us in like manner. Presently we reached the lower ground where, from a little grove of small roadside elms, a red-backed shrike would fly out and go before us, much as the yellow-hammer had done, but with longer flights and greater shyness, now and again rattling out his

anger at our intrusion. The hedges here were a very high and thick tangle of brambles and wild-growing things. Somewhere among them was the shrike's nest, doubtless, but it never happened to us to find it, though we searched often and long. After this all road and hedges ceased, and we seemed to be coming to the world's end, for there were no houses nor any sign of cultivation—only, on our left, a high rising hill-side of gorse and, on the right, the sea whose cliffs rose ever more steeply as we went on. At two fields' distance or so we would see rabbits sitting out on the short-nibbled grass which grew on the narrowing level stretch between the furzy hill-side and the cliffs; but before we came within measurable distance of them they were gone, into the gorse or to their holes in the cliff-side. But by this time we would have seen many jackdaws passing us overhead, going to or from their nests in the cliffs; the clamour of many voices, joining in the simple chorus of "Jack!", would be reaching us, and soon, peering over the edge of the cliff, we would see them coming and going like bees round a hive.

By this time, too, they would be growing aware of our approach, and the clamour would increase by way of protest, a protest which broke forth ten times more clamorous when we rolled a stone down rattling among their homes; then their cries would grow deafening. From among them a dark thing would sometimes sweep out like an arrow over the sea, as our stone went down the cliff; and at the same moment a shrill piercing cry would come from high above our heads. The dark arrow would slant upwards towards the cry, and as the light of the sun caught it we would see it to be a hen kestrel who had darted out from her cliff-home and gone aloft to remonstrate, together

with her spouse, on this invasion of their domesticity.

The kestrel's nest was rather beyond our hopes. We could see it, a bigger heap of sticks than any that the jackdaws had gathered, perched on a pinnacle of cliff inaccessible equally from above or from below. The sole means of getting to it appeared to be by a rope from the top; but though we often discussed the project of lowering each other over we never put it into effect by reason of the providential absence of a suitable rope. So at the kestrels we could only look and wonder as at something beyond our best ambitions. In the meantime we found sufficient danger and delight in scrambling about the shaly cliff in search of the more accessible jackdaws' nests. One would be on a niche or platform of the cliff's face, another in the mouth of a hole which a rabbit had deserted for a more convenient dwelling. We found them in all ages and stages; youngsters almost able to fly, newly-hatched nakednesses with hardly the rudiments of tails, eggs hard set and eggs newly laid. And all the while that we were taking this census of the younger population the old ones would be sweeping around us, almost brushing us with their wings and threatening, with exclamations of "Jack!" in the most menacing key, to send us hurtling down into the waters beneath. Indeed it would have taken but a little impetus to do this, for the cliff was of slaty shillet, bound here and there by tussocks and platforms of grass or by tufts of the sea-pink. The shillet slipped from beneath our feet and gave a very insecure hold, but our nerve was perfect and the school-boy's special providence protected us,—in which saying likely enough there is some tautology. Above, the shillet still cropped up from the yellow grass, and was the well-beloved

basking place of grayling butterflies who would rest invisible on the gray lichen-grown boulders. But we recked little of them when our hands, our pockets, our caps were full of young jackdaws crying piteously "Jack!"; to which cries the parents responded with deeper notes in the same sense, pursuing us and beating around our heads as the furies pursued and hunted Orestes. But our hard little hearts were deaf to the pathos of the mutual cries, and delightedly we bore off the youngsters who, sooth to say, soon accepted their orphanhood and their foster parents with something like Oriental philosophy. They would sit all day on the bough of the great elm tree on which we had put them, outside the doors of the stable yard, contented so long as they might intermittently say "Jack!" and have frequent globules of pasty oatmeal thrust down their gullets.

We have said that we never succeeded in taking the kestrels from these cliffs; but, for all that, we had more than one young kestrel as a pet, the gift of a connection by marriage of Joe's brother, who was "summat in the gaming way,"—a phrase which might mean a gambler or a gamekeeper, but, in its real sense, as we have reason to believe, signified a poacher. They were wild-eyed captives, these beautiful creatures, with the richest chestnut plumage melting into the most delicate pearl-ash gray. They were not always thus. When they came to us they were little balls of gray fluff, but even then with an eye that was a thing to wonder at and a beak which cleft chasms out of our small fingers. Their demeanour alternated between passionate struggles for freedom and an air of sullen indifference, but they always in either mood showed a healthy appetite for their raw meat. We have heard that the experience

of others has been more fortunate; but, so far as our knowledge of them went, we had no joy of kestrels in captivity.

Of all birds which we tried in captivity ("as pets," we used to call it, for euphony,) none were so successful as members of the corvine family, jackdaws, magpies, and that small relation of the crows, the starling. None of them ever talked, though their education was the passion of our young lives. We had been told that starlings would talk only when their tongues had been cleft by a sharp sixpence; but we could never bring ourselves to the point of performing the operation, and moreover sixpences were rare. But the starling, though he did not talk with the tongues of men, was for ever chattering, invincibly cheerful though he lived in a cage. The jackdaws did not live in a cage, yet their cheerfulness was not in proportion to their wider liberty,—the liberty of the clipped wing. They, however, we were pleased to think, did talk. True they said but the one word "Jack!" but they said it very often; there could be no mistake about their mastery of it, and we longed for the time when the years, bringing the philosophic mind, should add wisdom and variety to their tones. In youth they were a monotonous rusty black, as monotonous as their language and as their manners, for, after all, the jackdaw is deficient in social talent; his virtues are sterling and respectable, but he does not charm.

Of all pets that ever we kept, the most charming, certainly, was the magpie. It was full of varying moods and humours, truly; but none of them in the least akin to melancholy, whereas the normal disposition of the jackdaws was undoubtedly sombre. At times the magpie was as gay as the starling himself; but

he did not exhibit the same unreasonable and wearisome cheerfulness. If he had been shut up in a cage which wore out his tail-feathers, he would have bitten the wicker bars to splinters. He was capable of very genuine anger, and inexhaustible in his ingenuity for mischief. His shape and movement, and the bright motley of his plumage, were a joy to the eye; he was a Cavalier to the jackdaw's Puritan. The starling was handsome enough, with the sheen of his green and purple-mottled back, but you had to come close to his cage to appreciate him. The magpie attracted you from afar, only gaining added grace on a closer view which revealed a gloss of gayer colours on what afar off had looked like black; a near view was required, too, to recognise the unspeakable spirit of mischief which abode in his wicked gray eye. For months he was to us a pure joy,—to the gardeners a joy not altogether unmixed, for he was for ever playing harlequin to their pantaloons. Like most practical jokers, he erred in going too far. One day he amused himself most excellently in uprooting a clump of geraniums just bedded out. He was quite fearless, and it did not occur to his free spirit to obliterate his three-pronged footmarks on the newly-turned earth. Clipped in the wing as he was, he was always a little too fleet for the best of human pursuers. It was a strange shambling, side-long progress, aided by short flights of a few yards at a time, when his wing had not been lately pruned; but it generally served him well enough to take him to some low-branched tree, and once there no man had a chance of catching him. It needed extraordinary ingenuity to capture him for his periodical clipping, for his cunning was greater even than his agility. Altogether he had fared far better

than most of our pets, and we looked on him quite as a permanent fixture and a perpetual joy, but two days after his little joke with the geraniums he was missing. We called for him and sought him high and low, in all his favourite haunts, but we never heard again the chuckling response with which he was wont to greet us. To this day his fate remains veiled in the deepest mystery, only,—we make no specific charge against any one—but it is significant that his disappearance should have followed so closely on his exploit with the geraniums. After all it was but a little matter. What would they have said if we had had for a pet Charles Dickens's raven which ate up a grand piano and the greater part of the front staircase?

We never had a raven. We used to see ravens sometimes flying high above those cliffs in which we found the jackdaws' nests. We knew,—as boys do know things, of their inner consciousness or some other unimpeachable testimony (as a matter of fact we think Joe had said so)—that ravens actually did nest further along in those cliffs, where they rose higher and more sheer from the sea. But we never went so far afield as those great precipices, and even if we had reached their feet or summits we could no more have arrived at the ravens' nests than if they had been in another planet. The few ravens we have seen in captivity behaved themselves rather after the staid manner of the jackdaws; they had none of the engaging social qualities of the magpie.

Long after we had left boyhood behind us we met the most amusing pet of our acquaintance. He too was of the corvine tribe, but he came from Australia, was called, in fact, an Australian magpie, though he looked rather more like a saddle-backed crow. We were staying in the house of his owner when he arrived. A large plate

of meat was set for him on the terrace in front of the house; but he paid a dillettante attention to the victuals, occupying himself chiefly with a scrutiny of the house and his new surroundings, while on his side he was the cynosure of the eyes of all the family gazing at the new pet from the drawing-room windows. Other pets of the house were three very large black cats, great favourites, immensely spoiled, and very dignified and lazy. As we regarded the antipodean somewhat scornfully dallying with his dinner, we saw one of these solemn black monsters advancing at its usual dignified pace towards him. A cry arose from the assembled family, "Oh, Tigris will kill the magpie!" The head of the family desired to await developments. There was a painful suspense of breath, as we watched the shaggy black Persian advancing on the plate and the magpie with a steady, unhurried step. The magpie stood aside from the plate, and, with head well on one side, watched the on-coming robber. There was a world of meaning in the glance of that wicked gray eye, but it was all lost on the dignified composure of the Persian who, without deigning to look at the magpie, proceeded to sniff at the contents of the plate. The bird, motionless as a statue, waited till the black whiskers came inquiringly over the edge of the plate; then he made one sudden hop, lunged once, with a lightning stroke of his beak, at the beautiful glossy black muzzle, and was back again in his watchful attitude so quickly that one almost felt disposed to doubt if he had ever left it. There was no doubt in the mind of the cat. That lightning stroke of the beak had much the same effect on the Persian as if a bomb had burst somewhere in its middle. It leaped with a yell five paces backward, its legs extended, every separate hair of its long fur standing off it at full length.

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When it reached the ground it hesitated not for one moment; no fleeting notion of vengeance crossed its mind; with head and tail depressed, in manner as unlike as possible to its dignified approach, it retreated at a good round trot to the shrubbery whence it had come. The magpie slowly relaxed its attentive aspect, and as it addressed itself once more to the plate of viands there were those among the spectators at the window who were ready to aver most solemnly that they saw it wink. The comedy was not yet finished. Before our laughter at the discomfiture of Tigris had died away, a second Persian, Darius, emerged from the shrubbery in the same stately fashion. The bird at once resumed the statuesque pose. In the same manner as before, the cat advanced; the bird repeated its tactics with the same triumphant results; and within two minutes of its first advance the cat was retreating with undignified haste to recover its composure in the haven of the shrubbery. There was yet another act. The third cat came on the scene, approached the plate, met with a like reception; and he too rejoined his stricken companions in the laurels. It was evident that the cats had played the game in the spirit of those who go into a "Hoax Exhibition" at a charitable bazaar, the first comers revealing nothing to those who follow them of the nature of the entertainment which they will find within.

From this day forth, however, the Australian magpie was headman of all the pets on the premises, and none dared interfere with him any more. His first success encouraged him to further triumphs. He used to lie in wait, screwed up in a corner, on the stone steps by which the nursemaids, with the children, descended the terrace. As they stepped past him he would dash out, with a bark like a

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dog (though we believe the native Australian dingo is voiceless) and, with a dab of his vicious beak on the unprotected ankles of the maids, so frighten them that they almost dropped the babies. This was his favourite pastime, until he had established so complete a reign of terror that this part at least of his occupation was gone. His crowning impudence, however, was exhibited when the regimental band of the neighbouring garrison came over to play at a garden-party. The soldiers, arranged in the usual circle, were discoursing popular airs under the conduct of a glorious individual who beat time very impressively in the centre. The display of martial bravery should have been sufficient to inspire reverence in any

one, most of all, as might have been thought, in a colonist. The magpie, however, utterly unimpressed, crept between the legs of the *cornet-à-piston*, and, taking a position within the circle opposite to the bandmaster, began mimicking his rather pompous gestures with so ludicrously successful a caricature that the gallant tune came to an untimely end in the uncontrollable laughter of the performers. This was his last great effort. His talent for practical joking brought him into so much disfavour that, chiefly through the petticoated influence of the nursery, he was expelled as remorselessly as any other anarchist; and his genius now finds fewer opportunities in the less congenial atmosphere of the Zoological Gardens.

A FORGOTTEN VIRTUE.

WHEN Charles Lamb dismissed the dictionary as *biblion a-biblion*, he perhaps forgot how to read it aright. For the long rows of words defiling in order by the letter under which they enlisted, have to a more curious or sympathetic eye not the mere majesty of procession alone, but an interest as individuals in society, with all their resulting incongruities and amenities. There is something strangely human in these regiments of the line; and it needs no very elastic fancy to imagine them composed of living beings, with thoughts and feelings of their own. Given the fancy, imagination runs riot. Pride of caste, heart-burnings of self-manufacture, ambition for social success—to win the *entrée* of a poem of Tennyson, for instance, in the days when he held open house,—might not these be with words even as they are with men? And a little apart from the hurrying, struggling throng, with its jostlings and its jealousies, where words are really, as Archbishop Trench called them, “living forces,” may we not see some lonelier and more leisurely figures, doing homely work for a modest wage, but wearing, in the quiet dignity and self-sufficiency of their retirement, the legible memory of better days? Such a word in such a world is Piety.

Piety, holiest Piety, as one votary hails her, comes of an honourable Roman stock, so ancient that its beginning is hidden in obscurity. A genealogist, with his pedantry kindled to enthusiasm and his ingenuity touched with rashness, might find in the old Greek letter π (pi) the primitive father of its derivative *pius*, tracing from the two-legged firmness and upright-

ness of the parent letter the qualities which the word denotes. But leaving these curious speculations to the Heralds' Office department of philology, let us rather confine ourselves to historic times and deeds. Here Piety, nurtured on Roman soil, appears as the national virtue of the Romans. What “the Beautiful in the Good” was to the Greece of Plato, such was Piety to Virgil's Rome, and as an ideal of conduct it may still be studied.

It was a tangible enough ideal to the dissolute Augustus Cæsar, nephew of the Cæsar, eponym of emperors, though never Emperor himself, and to his vain premier, Mæcenas, eponym of patrons to this day. For in the evil times upon which Rome fell after Brutus and Cassius had assassinated the man who was too great for them, times when wild-beast shows and public butcheries were the pastimes of the populace, when disbanded armies took their Capuan ease within the city, and eastern favourites with eastern manners ruled the court, the Emperor, who was a debauchee, and his minister, who was a fop, deliberately set themselves, by precept, if not by example, to reinstate the old religion in the new Rome. They made a calculated effort to restore Piety to her oblivious votaries, to realise the forgotten ideal of the simple, upright life which they had called *pius*. Such had been the life of that earlier generation, who had handled alternately the ploughshare and the sword. By “Piety and arms,”¹ they had made Rome great,

¹ . . . Tantum ferro quantum pietate potentes
Stamus.—PROPERTIUS, iv. 22.

but neither weapon could bear use in excess. So long as the use of arms did not unlearn the use of piety, which meant the "pure religion breathing household laws," and making the householder's common routine a succession of holy acts, so long Rome's greatness was secure. But when, as had happened now, Cincinnatus went out to the war, and died there, and bred a new race of soldiers far from his father's fields, then the use of piety was overborne by too much use of arms. And it is to this lapsed habit and balance of husbandry and fighting that we owe the attempt, unique in history, to restore the prestige of an abstract virtue.

Failure was a foregone conclusion. Rome had changed too much for any such act of restitution to succeed. Neither the fiat of an Emperor, nor the fashion of a patron, backed though they were by the most earnest sermon ever fashioned in poetic form, availed to arrest the course of history. Time, in its revolution, had pronounced the doom of Rome as inevitably as Roman Cato had pronounced the doom of Carthage. In the euphemism of the poet, "God had other thoughts;" but the poems remain a unique monument to a lost cause. The *ÆNEID* of Virgil is the epic of Piety, written, as all literary epics must be, when the epoch which it reflected had passed. *Æneas, pius Æneas*, is the concrete presentment of an abstract virtue, a disused practice; and his epithet is less an epithet than part and parcel of his name. Virgil was recommended by Mæcenas to the notice of Augustus as a possible means to the great end of renewing the youth of Rome; and with this condition his imperial employer gave him a free hand. The *ÆNEID* stands as his executed commission, a poem deliberately designed to bring Rome back to her former religion, incorporating to this end,

with antiquarian lovingness, any old and loyal tradition which might rekindle the waning enthusiasms of a forgetful generation. In it may best be seen Piety at its best,—the piety which had made Rome great, but survived, when she was great only as a memory and a hope.

Few characters and few poems have suffered so much from misinterpretation as have *Æneas* and the *ÆNEID*. The circumstances of its origin are often neglected; for sufficient emphasis is not always laid upon the fact that the *ÆNEID* was a government manifesto, a state document, an authoritative ukase. It was part of the imperial scheme for the regeneration of Rome. The other reforms of Augustus were directed to the same end. One poet, whose armour of cynicism the flatteries of court and circle took long to penetrate, voluntarily calls him "Religion's founder and refunder," so true it was that he applied himself less to innovate than to renovate. With this, too, in view, Virgil introduced into his picture of pious times those references to former customs and fond superstitions, which strike us as cold, if not pedantic, but which sought to arrest them in their passage, and to quicken the fires which had once fomented them. What, then, was the nature of the pious man, and how was this Piety conceived, from whose restoration poet, patron, and emperor dated the moral salvation of the Roman world?

It was, to begin with, a wide virtue, giving laws to every relation of the patriarchal life. It expressed the obligation of man to God, of subject to state, of child to father. And it was further a reciprocal virtue, defining the relation of God to man, of state to subject, of father to child. There might be a conflict of pieties, a lesser contending with a greater, with perhaps a bias of love, or piety, or

desire, weighting the scale of the slighter duty. So the man of exact piety would have to balance and discriminate, to recognise, in fact, a rigid etiquette and right of precedence determining his action. The perfect man of Rome's ideal was heroic before he was human, grand before he was gracious. We miss in the picture designed by Virgil as a prototype of the makers of Rome, and an example to their degenerate descendants, that touch of amiable weakness which, albeit a declension from the standard of perfection, is at least a concession to the demands of flesh. Piety was a quality of sterling gold, without small change, and "pious Æneas" has, to modern eyes, the defects of his quality. He is chill, where love might have fired him; statuesque, where tenderness might have bent him; deaf, where he might have yielded to desire. This is the first point at which Piety clashes with later laws of conduct. We give our respect, but we withhold our admiration; we withhold even our consent to that conception of duty incarnate which confronts us in the *ÆNEID*. It is magnificent, but it is not life: and herein lay its failure to convince in its own day. The star-like aloofness from human passion, the devoted pursuit of a far-off ideal, these may have been the qualities of that remote and consecrated pilgrim who brought the Latin gods from Ilum to Rome, but they were as impossible and mythological to the civilised Roman of the first centuries, before and after Christ, as were those vagrant gods themselves. Æneas is a hero, and no man; but the complexities of modern life cannot be resolved by the simple standard of heroism. The epic of Piety was also its epitaph, and day by day its light faded and its meaning failed.

How false, for instance, is our appreciation of the fourth book of the *ÆNEID*,

if we misinterpret the gravity of this virtue and under-estimate its scope. It has been said that here Virgil misses true greatness by failing to reconcile us to the conduct of Æneas. More discreetly seen, it is here that Virgil surpasses himself, and carries us with him beyond the limits of the drama of individual passion to a personal sympathy with a State moving across the stage, and a transcendent enthusiasm for a national idea. Rome herself moves in procession as the weighty lines of his narrative wind along. Let us consider this in more detail. The path of the perfect man, even on paper, was not always smooth. Piety was a religion, but the religion might be a yoke. Obedience and loyalty to a statuesque ideal could not proceed without some sacrifices by the way, as when Æneas, after the ghost of Hector had committed to him Troy and her gods, had to save his son, the future repository of that trust, and his aged father, before his wife. The romantic tale of suffering Dido, the loveliest widow whom any age has seen, is too well known to be repeated here; but one point is too often missed for us not to emphasise it. Romance and pathos and sentiment take the part of the deserted bride in the horror of her "waking dream" of endless journeying through an empty land, and in her desolate cry from the margin of the unkind sea which was bearing her lover away. "Go," she cried; "follow thine Italy before the wind, and seek thy kingdom through the waters. I only pray, if the perfect [pious] gods have power in aught, mayst thou drain thy punishment on some mid-ocean rock, calling again and again upon the name of Dido." And what is the answer to this appeal? Do the perfect gods exact the retribution due from broken vows and unhallowed pledges, or, if not, does the poet apologise in any way for the

triumph of unrighteousness, and the oppression of the weaker vessel? Or, to re-write this according to a view of *pietas* which has been coloured by its derivative pity, do the gentle gods exercise their prerogative of mercy, and rebuke the cruelty of the fugitive lover? This is the reply:

At pius Æneas, quamquam lenire dolentem
Solando cupit et dictis avertere curas,
Multa gemens, magnoque animum labe-
factus amore,
Iussa tamen divum exsequitur—

which may thus be Englished:

Perfect Æneas, though he sore doth long,
With consolation trembling on his tongue,
To soothe her grief and charm away her
cares,
Groaning, and faint for the great love he
bears,
Yet wreaks the gods' command.

Love, and pity, and desire, and all the weaker impulses are conquered, and Æneas is perfect still, and the perfect gods approve. *Impius*, Dido may hail him, but he is *pius* throughout, illustrating to the letter Tennyson's stately lines,

His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Truth prevails. He is a nobler Antony, preferring Rome to Cleopatra; an earlier Lovelace, preferring duty to love; though in all ages Altheas have not been wanting who, unconsciously holding with Herbert Spencer that patriotism is a "reflex egoism," would have counted the greater sacrifice the lesser sin. This is the apology of Piety, no waterish term of pitiful soft-heartedness, but the

Stern daughter of the voice of God,
.....a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;

and a sure deliverance from present doubt and temptation. A quality great as this, lying dormant in the excessive activity of the sword, Virgil,

Mæcenæ, and Augustus did wisely to endeavour to restore.

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
It is the generous Spirit—

Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train,
Turns his necessity to glorious gain.

More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
Who if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim.

The quotation might pause only with the limits of the poem; for the ideal character whom Wordsworth portrays, drawing partly from his sailor-brother John, partly from his sailor-hero Nelson, corresponds by a more than accidental likeness to the Roman of Virgil's ideal. There was much in common between the aims of these laureates, something between their language, something between their lives. "The Prude," as Virgil was fondly nicknamed by the less immaculate youth of Naples, and the simple recluse whom we meet in Miss Wordsworth's diary, were affected by the same reaction to pastoral scenes and rustic virtues. Wordsworth was not more anxious to recall his country from the idolatry of "rapine, avarice, expense," to "the homely beauty of the good old cause," than was Virgil to renew in Rome the traditions of her ancient faith. Piety was the patriarchal religion, concerned with the worship of gods, country and father. But the age of the patriarchs had passed, and piety sufficed no longer for the whole conduct of civil life.

The demands of empire, the obligations of culture, the various and complex responsibilities of expansion, had as inevitably weaned Rome from her older habits as Puritanism relinquished its too literal application of Biblical precepts in face of the realities of practical politics. Rome had outgrown her swaddling-clothes. Piety had been the steady light set on a hill to guide the simple, illiterate warrior-ploughmen of the early Republic. But the lights had multiplied. Conquest requires armies, and armies have to be fed, kept, and humoured. A city-state cannot become an empire without grave political dissensions, and professional politicians are partisans before they are patriots. An unlettered community does not assimilate its arts without creating the arrogance of monopoly and the jealousy of exclusion. So in the imperial Rome which Augustus received at the hands of his illustrious uncle, there was on the one side a circle of rich young patricians, with a veneer of Greek culture and a basis of Greek vice; and on the other, a race of soldiers luxuriating in idleness, with an appetite, which grew by indulgence, for the red dust of the arena. It was in vain that he endeavoured to undo the past and recall these parties to the peace of a common ideal, long outgrown and outworn. There were to be no more "happy warriors" of Rome, no more leaders like unto Æneas,

Sans compare

In perfect duty, and in valorous war.

So far we have chiefly considered Piety in its loftiest bearing, as the serene religion of the gods' missionary to Rome. But inasmuch as Rome's message was a message to every Roman, it was in its daily operation on the minds of ordinary men that it seemed so valuable to the imperial patriots. When every man does what

is right, without question of convenience or complication of desire, the world, though it may be duller, will at any rate be better. But further, the Romans, who were essentially a nation of affairs, apt to exact what we still call a *quid pro quo*, were perhaps less reverent and business-like in their piety. The quality of perfection was binding in heaven no less than on earth, and men who rendered due service to the gods could command due recompense in return. By the recognition of this simple equation in the arithmetic of Piety, several passages in the *ÆNEID* are rescued from misinterpretation. In the terrible lines of the second book which precede the death of Priam an excellent instance is obtained. Troy has been taken, and the palace is thrown open to promiscuous fugitives from the slaughter without. The old king has just yielded to the representations of Hecuba, his wife,

Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis
Tempus eget—

and has consented to stay with her for life or death, when Polites, one of his sons, comes rushing through the corridor, flying before Pyrrhus, mortally wounded. Just as he reaches his father's sight, he stumbles, falls, and breathes his last. Then Priam turns to Pyrrhus, and exclaims: "For this outrage, that thou hast made the father look upon the death of the son,

Di, si qua est cælo pietas, quæ talia curet,
Persolvant grates dignas et præmia reddant
Debita—

may the gods, if there yet be righteousness [piety] in heaven to take count of this, return thee thanks deserved, and render the payment due." What was this *pietas* of the gods to which he appeals? Note the language which expands its operation:

return, deserved, render, due. The words all express the attributes of a right which has been earned; it is no suppliant's cry, but a claimant's. For the demand of Priam is no old man's prayer for pity, but the appeal from duty outraged to duty retributive. Priam is in the gods' debt, and his vindication is secure, provided only that the gods are pious indeed, have indeed the sense of justice.

And here is a fitting place whence to descry the path of Piety's degeneration. In the confusion of caste which overtook so many words at the imposition of Christianity upon Paganism, Piety was one that fared badly. The introduction of a more spiritual element, of a remoteness and an aloofness into the conception of Deity, which was so alien to Greek or Roman, disturbed the relations of God and man. Gods could no longer be regarded as human beings raised to a higher power, a little wayward, a little untractable, but quite transparent. Hebraism, which taught the inscrutability of the divine ways, and the profoundness of the divine wisdom, proportionally belittled man in his own estimation. With this view there could be no question of merit and desert, of debt and payment between God and man. The bewildered cry of conscious mortality, "Lord, what is man that Thou takest knowledge of him, the son of man that Thou makest account of him!" was a point of view precisely antithetical to that reciprocity of obligation which *Pietas* denoted. Equal justice is the last right men

would now demand from God, for the divine standard has become incommensurate with the human. Therefore the expression of God's perfection to man is in deeds of mercy, of pardon, and of pity. We may still exclaim in moments of doubt, "*Di, si qua est caelo Pietas!*" God, if Thou art perfect indeed"; but by piety we mean pity. Knowing, even in our darkest distress, that our wrongs can but be a degree worse than our wrong-doing, we hesitate to challenge that omniscient justice. Our appeal is rather to His universal tenderness. And side by side with its new rendering of the relations of the human and divine, ecclesiasticism gave birth to the age of chivalry and its repaired ideal. Respect for women and pity for weakness became virtues more knightly, because more Christ-like, than the undeviating duty of the patriarchal code. The grandest Pagan was never more than a man; he lacked the touch which makes it man's chief glory to be gentle. So on twin lines arose, and widened as time went on, the distinction (which it is a too common anachronism to read into the *ÆNEID*) between these two forms of the same word; and pity and piety, God's boon to man and man's homage to God, though once reciprocal and synonymous, have long ago parted ways. Spirituality has gained; but Piety, its sphere contracted and itself attenuated, may well look back with sorrow to the days when its name inspired a national poem, and its significance was not misunderstood.

THE EDITOR OF "THE CUADRILLA."

"My dear Esteban, if I could only persuade you to yield. *El Presidente* will not."

It was insufferably hot outside Bellem jail, in the city of Mexico, and almost hotter inside, even in the dark corner where the editor of THE CUADRILLA sat, fanning himself slowly with a crumpled piece of paper while he talked to his friend Tio Juarez, a tall handsome man with Indian features and the brown velvet eyes of Spain. The editor laughed lightly and shook his head. "It is for *El Presidente* to yield, dear Tio, not for me. If he keeps me here for a year,—well, what then? I am as stubborn as he, I think." He turned his head and looked round the crowded room, packed with men of every nationality and of every rank; half-breeds arrested in a tipsy brawl, highway robbers, horse-thieves, petty swindlers, and here and there a group of *peons* drinking and dicing the long hours away. The editor of THE CUADRILLA smiled as he looked, though the scene was not a pleasant one. "What was it my article said? Oh—that the President was a liar! Do you know, Tio, I am beginning to think he is a coward, too."

"He will tire you out, as surely as your name is Esteban Diaz."

"Eh, then," Esteban Diaz retorted quickly, "but I will forswear my name, my Tio. I will not tire just yet. But you will be tired of this airless room. You had better go, *amigo*; there is much sickness about, and you must think of Teresita. Coming, my friend," he went on, turning quickly to answer a whispered call from another corner of the room.

Tio Juarez looked sharply round. "Who is it, Esteban? It sounded like a woman's voice."

Esteban shook his head. "There are no women here, thank God," he said. "No, it is a boy—a *peon* in a fever, and I must go and see to him. Farewell."

"But stay, Esteban; is there nothing I can bring with me next time?"

"No; except some cigarettes,—and perhaps some fruit, if Teresita's garden can spare it."

"It can spare its best for you."

"I desire the fruit only for my *peon* yonder," Esteban said rather haughtily. "Tell Teresita so,—not ungraciously, Tio—and farewell."

As his friend went away down the long room, dispirited with his fruitless appeal, Esteban Diaz threaded his way among the groups of prisoners towards the corner where the young *peon* lay on his bright coloured cloak, a bundle of straw, covered with a blue cotton wrapper, for his pillow.

"Are you easier, now, Juan?"

Esteban asked. "Is there anything that you need?"

The *peon* lifted a pair of fever-bright eyes and shook his head wearily. "No, I need nothing,—but sweet air. *Santa Maria*, the sweet air!"

Esteban smiled rather grimly. "That is not for the foolish people who offend *El Presidente*," he said. "The air of the jail is the air for *their* lungs, Juan."

The lad's face flushed darkly. "*El Presidente*,—curse him!"

"And why?"

"My mother cursed him with her last breath," Juan answered hoarsely.

"Look!" He sat up and struck his lips with his clenched hand. "Do you know these, *Señor*?"

Esteban looked at the sensual yet delicate lips and shrugged his shoulders. "*El Presidente's* mouth is not to be mistaken. And so he sends his son to prison as well as his enemies. Well, at least he is impartial."

"I am his enemy because I am his son," Juan said fiercely. "*Ay de mi*, if I were out of this hole, and in *El Presidente's* garden with a knife in my hand—*Madre de Dios*, I would not waste my time in cutting oranges."

"It is just as well you are here, my friend," Esteban said quietly. "Eh, you will think so soon,—not now when you are angry; but by and by you will see that nothing greatly matters."

"So?"

"No," Esteban smiled a little; "except to have walked as straight as lay in one's strength."

"*Ay de mi*! my way has been crooked," the boy said with a sparkle in his eyes that did not look like repentance. "I have beaten the dogs of Indians over the cards, and I have robbed that fat Jew Israel Morra, and,—and many more sins I remember; but I have never made any woman cry cold tears for me in my life. Never, *Señor*."

"Ah! the hot tears do not count; it is the cold tears that weigh heavy on a man," Esteban said gravely. "And for the rest—"

"For the rest, I have been a great sinner," Juan said, with a half laugh; "but I do not feel afraid. Fray Bartolomé told me I was lost; but Fray Agostino said I was not so far astray as,—as Dolores, my mother. But where Dolores my mother is, I would rather be, than with the saints. What should a *peon* do in their company, *Señor*? The priests do not understand that what one knows one

likes best. *Ay de mi*, that is so with us poor devils of *peons*!"

"Perhaps the priests are all wrong, and the *peons* all right," Esteban said thoughtfully. "If one put a blind man in a garden and bade him keep to the middle of the path, straying neither right nor left, that one were a fool. And since the *peons* are put in a crooked path, how can any man expect them to walk straight? Do you know, Juan, the priests have a good deal to learn yet?"

"These are new words," Juan said, moving restlessly on his bed. "Where did you learn them, *Señor*?"

"From the Vert Louis."

"A priest?"

"No; a river in the north. Very cold, and very deep, and very green it is, and very swift, and there are tall cliffs on each side, and the fish in its pools are stone-blind."

"*Virge*! and you were bred beside it, *Señor*?"

"Yes; I and three others; Tio, Teresita, Manuela and I." Esteban was looking into the sunlight, with eyes that saw only the green water of the Vert Louis, and ears that heard only the swing of the wind in the pines of the *cañon*, and the song of the men on the timber-rafts coming down from Aray. "And now, Tio and Teresita are man and wife, and Manuela is—*ay de mi*, only God and Vert Louis know where, and I am here in Belem jail."

"She was drowned, your Manuela?"

"Not my Manuela!" Esteban corrected him sharply. "She was drowned at fourteen, the poor pretty child!"

"The *peons* have a song of another Manuela, that they sing about the streets," Juan interrupted. "'La Manuela' they call it; do you know it, *Señor*?"

Esteban nodded. "I know it; I used to sing it once to tease the other Manuela."

"Sing something," Juan said wearily. "My ears are full of ugly noises. Sing, *Señor*, what you will—one of the songs of Belem, if you choose."

"They also are full of ugly noises," Esteban said, moistening one end of Juan's cloak in the jar which stood near, half full of ice-cold water, and laying it over the boy's hot forehead. "I will sing you something Manuela used to sing to us when we sat round the fire in the long cold winter evenings; it is the song of the Old Red Rock." He waited a moment to recall the almost forgotten melody, and then began to sing, very softly:

"From the Old Red Rock we came,
Our feet as a child's were light;
Our hearts held God as a flame;
Now in our hearts there is night.
Our borders stand fast and strong,
Our foes crouch low and are dumb;
But the old old way of the song,
To our chill lips will not come.
From the Old Red Rock we came,
We came, and our feet were light;
Our feet are weary and lame,
And heavy as lead to-night.
Our priests have forgot the way,
The path that was once so plain.
Kind Death, lead us back some day
To the Old Red Rock again!"

Esteban's voice died away into a whisper, for Juan's eyelids were weighed down with sleep, and his restless hands were still.

"*Señor!*" whispered a voice beside him. Esteban looked round and saw an Indian woman crouched at his side, her bright black beads of eyes fixed on his face. "*Señor*, you sang just now a song I had never dreamed to hear again; a song of my own people."

"Are you of Aztec blood then, good mother?" Esteban asked, also in a whisper, and with no particular interest in the answer.

The woman nodded slowly and impressively. "Ay, am I, *Señor*, old and ugly and poor as I be, I am of the

blood of the kings of Mexico. *Señor*," she spoke in a yet lower whisper, "I have stood on the Hunters' Hill, and seen that stirring which was underneath its grass and flowers; and I have walked among the cypresses and seen Montezuma the last king walking there with the woman who betrayed Cuzco,—Marina, ten thousand curses on her pale blood, say I! *Señor*, because you have sung my own song, shall I do you a kindness?"

"Can you, good mother?" Esteban said, rather bitterly.

The Indian smiled. "I can give you what dreams you will, or I will," she said, scornfully. "*Señor*, it is the fashion of our blood to repay gift for gift. I will give you to see and speak with the woman you love best."

"Teresa!" Esteban stopped short his face flaming.

"I do not deal in names," the Indian said coolly. "There, there—go to sleep, foolish one!" She put her cold brown fingers on Esteban's eyes, and closed them gently. They were so cold that the light touch sent a shiver through him, and he opened his eyes with a start to find himself standing on a rock in the middle of a swift river, with a great wind sweeping up the *cañon* into his face, and bringing sounds of distant music with it. "Vert Louis!" he said, as he knelt down and plunged his arm elbow-deep in the cold green water. "Manuela, are you glad to see me back again?" He had not expected to see her, though he had addressed her, but somehow he was not in the least surprised to find her standing beside him, in her old dress, something dark blue and thin that was not too long to hide the slender ankles and pretty bare feet.

"I thought you were dead," he said, speaking without the faintest trace of surprise, as dreamers do. "I thought you—"

"Wrong, you see," Manuela broke

in, with her soft laugh. "Feel my hand; is it warm, Esteban?"

Esteban took it in his, and let it drop again quickly. "Very warm," he said; "but—but it does not feel like flesh and blood, Manuela."

Manuela laughed again. "Suppose I am not flesh and blood, Esteban," she said lightly. "I have gained more than I have lost. See here, Teresita is always with me."

"But Teresita is alive."

"So she is; but the Teresita I have for my companion is the Teresita of ten years old. I have you, too, Esteban. No use straining your eyes; you cannot see yourself or Teresita either. You could not see even me, unless—unless I pleased. How you have altered, Esteban!"

"Yes?"

"Poor boy!" Manuela laughed once more. "Poor foolish boy! Are you tired, Esteban?"

"Tired to death, Manuela."

"Poor foolish boy," Manuela said again. "The dead are not tired at all. Then you would have known me again,—anywhere?"

"Anywhere; you are just the same Manuela."

"That is good," she said with a satisfied sigh. "I was afraid I might have changed to you. Are you thirsty as well as tired, poor Esteban?" She stooped down, and making a cup of her hollowed palm, filled it with the cold sparkling water and held it to Esteban's lips. "Is it good?" she said, smiling, as he drank thirstily. "Is it sweet?"

"It is the sweetest water in the world," Esteban said with a long sigh of content.

"Well," Manuela went on, "and so Teresita is unhappy, and you love her, and Tio has left off loving her, and it is all a weary puzzle. I am very sorry for you three poor children."

"Yes, Teresita is unhappy," Esteban said slowly; "and I thought I loved her, but,—I am not so sure now."

"No; that is the worst of you who are alive," Manuela said compassionately; "you are never sure of anything in the world,—from beginning to end. And Tio and Teresita must keep on trying to straighten out their puzzle, and never will succeed; but you have the threads in your hand now, Esteban, and the puzzle is simpler than you think."

"Do you mean—? Manuela, I am so tired of my life."

"You poor foolish children," Manuela said, with the smile that was so curious a contrast in its stillness and security to the slender girlish figure and sweet girlish face, whose lines were just as delicate and indefinite as they were when the Vert Louis sealed them with death years before. "You poor foolish children, I am so sorry for you; and yet your troubles are very laughable. You know, after all, there is nothing in your world that greatly matters,—except to have walked as straight as lay in one's strength."

With the sound of his own words ringing in his ears Esteban woke, and found the Indian woman crouched beside him, watching him with her bright black eyes. "Did I keep my word?" she said. "Did you dream of your heart's dearest, *Señor*?"

Esteban nodded. "Well, Juan," he said, as the boy stirred restlessly, and sighed; "did you sleep as sweetly as I? Why—" He bent down hastily; there was something in the *peon's* face that struck him with a sudden fear.

"Juan, poor fellow, what is it?"

"Do not trouble him," said the Indian woman unconcernedly. "He is nearly dead, *Señor*. Go to sleep, my son, and dream well." She bent forward and signed the cross on his

breast and forehead ; and even as she did so, Juan the *peon* died.

"So the fever is in the prison," Esteban heard the Indian woman saying to a countryman of hers, a determined and desperate horse-thief. "It comes in alone, but it will go out with a great company, brother."

"If it gives me a free pass to the happy hunting-grounds I do not care," the man retorted. The woman only laughed, and went noiselessly back to her seat beside Esteban.

"Mother," he said feebly, "the fever is here, you say. It has stricken Juan,—and me. How many more?"

"There are only two sick. But you are not one of them, *Señor*," the woman cried sharply. "No, no, not you."

"Feel my hands," Esteban answered. The woman did so, and hid her wrinkled brown face, moved for the moment out of her wonted Indian stoicism. "Listen, if my friend or his wife should come, tell them I—I am dead and buried."

"They are here," the woman said composedly. "They shall not see you, trust me, *Señor* ; the pretty one shall run no risks. Cover up your face only, with this." It was poor Juan's

cloak. Esteban drew it over his face silently, and lay listening to the monotonous tones of the Indian's voice, broken in upon by ejaculations of grief and surprise from Tio, and the quiet sobbing of a woman. Presently he heard Teresita's little light feet go reluctantly towards the doorway, and the echo of her sobs grew fainter ; but even then he kept the cloak swathed round his head, lest she should hear his panting breath, and understand, and come back to him even then. He heard their voices still from the doorway ; would they never go, he wondered ? Would Tio's voice never have done booming in his ears, and Teresita's—was it Teresita's voice, after all, or was it the sound of a bell,—the *angelus* ringing down from the chapel of St. Paul ; and were these the waters of the Vert Louis sweeping him away with them, deafening him and blinding and stifling him with their noise and foam ?

"Manuela," he gasped ; and then some one tore the covering from his face, and called on those that stood round him to keep back and give him air. But the Indian woman was too late ; not all the winds of Vert Louis could have put breath in Esteban Diaz's lips again.

A SOLDIER'S JOURNAL.

NEVER did man keep a diary more sedulously than the gallant Major Knox of King George the Second's Forty-Third Regiment of Infantry. The two bulky volumes which, with the assistance of those numerous friends whose names, as they deserve to be, are immortalised upon the fly-leaves, he has left for our exceeding pleasure and profit, are not in a physical sense light reading. They are not volumes which you can enjoy lolling at ease, as you would wish to enjoy the confidences of so cheery a gossip. The Major has to be taken seriously upon a table of no mean calibre whose legs are above suspicion; but he is well worth the effort. His pages are stained and yellow, at any rate the ones in our possession are, with the wear of nearly a century and a half, for it was immediately after the close of the Seven Years' War that they came fresh from the press.

They open with the month of June, 1757, when Pitt's mind is beginning to turn definitely towards America as the battle-ground whereon the great struggle between France and England must be ultimately decided, and British sea-ports are all astir with mustering troops. They close at the same period of 1760, when the last blow had been struck at the French power in Canada and the colony was finally handed over to Great Britain. Their author, in fact, tells us of those three glorious years during which Pitt lifted England from gloom and dependency to the first place among the nations of the world.

Knox does not profess to write

history. He was merely a humble actor in the stirring scenes which made it, who wrote down with unflagging diligence the details of his daily life and surroundings, and wrote them with much intelligence and some little humour. Every historian of the period has in fact been glad enough to consult Knox for facts, and even for figures, so accurate and painstaking was this Major of Infantry; but Knox tells us innumerable things which are beneath the dignity of history, no doubt, but are none the less interesting, and to some of us, perhaps, even more so.

The Major's journal opens in Galway, where he has been for some time quartered. He is now under orders for Cork, where seven or eight British regiments are awaiting the arrival of a fleet of transports and line-of-battle ships that are to take them to America. Five or six thousand men have been thus suddenly thrown into the capital of south-western Ireland. Knox, who is an Irishman himself, if not actually a native of the district, cannot withhold his admiration of the cordiality, kindness, and hospitality with which the citizens treated the troops. He compares it to the dishonesty, greed, and imposition soldiers were accustomed to meet with in other cities of the kingdom, and is hugely pleased with and proud of his compatriots.

What a business it was to get an army across the seas in those days is brought forcibly home to the reader of these pages. One is apt to forget what a vast fleet of ships, even so late as Wolfe's day, was required for the transport and protection of what

would now be but the fraction of a single army-corps. Four or five troopships would nowadays carry to the ends of the earth the five thousand men who sailed from Cork in the summer of 1757; but on that occasion no less than sixty transports and twenty line-of-battle ships sailed out of Queenstown harbour.

The transport of those days averaged about two hundred and fifty tons burthen, and the privateering instincts of the rough sea-dogs who often commanded them is amusingly illustrated by Knox's own experience. The fleet had sailed under sealed orders, only knowing that America was its destination. A fierce gale scattered the ships almost as soon as they had cleared the Irish coasts, and when the wind fell Knox and the hundred soldiers he had with him found themselves alone upon the waste of waters without a sail in sight. The seals were then broken, and the skipper learned that, in case of emergencies such as the present one, he was to make the best of his way to Halifax, Nova Scotia. The course he proceeded to steer, however, aroused the suspicions of the keen-eyed Major to such an extent that, landsman though he was, he proceeded to remonstrate. The skipper, with much superfluous heat of language, declared that he knew well what he was about, and so indeed he did. Knox's suspicions, still further quickened by finding his nautical friend's cabin stuffed full of cutlasses and muskets, proved correct; and indeed the latter frankly acknowledged that he was sailing north to get upon the track of prizes. It appeared that he carried unknown to his present commanders, letters of marque, and thought the opportunity which provided him with a fighting force of nearly a hundred soldiers too good a one to be lost. Knox seems to have been powerless

in the matter, and nothing loth perhaps, resigned himself to the situation. Several sails were sighted; twice the decks were cleared for action; but to the disgust of all, Knox included, the supposed enemy on each occasion turned out to be a friend.

It seems to have been a custom in those days for the troops to wear their uniforms inside out on board ship for the sake of economy; and the linings of the Forty-Third being white gave rise to a rather amusing incident at the expense of a heavily armed Massachusetts privateer. The latter, supposing the troops to be Frenchmen, bore boldly down upon the transport in hot haste for a fight; when the mistake was discovered, the two ships fraternised together so cordially that their spars and ropes became entangled and the American for a few minutes was in great peril. The Yankee skipper, says Knox, instead of taking prompt action, fell down on his knees upon the deck, and proceeded to pray in a loud and dolorous voice. The rugged, foul-mouthed old British tar, however, jumped into the rigging of his own ship, and, trumpet in hand, did the shouting and swearing for both crews so efficiently that the danger was soon overcome.

One other incident of the voyage the Major recounts with great gusto. Divine service seems to have been held punctually every Sunday morning upon deck. One of the ship's officers, a most devout individual, was in the habit of officiating, but had at the same time to keep an eye on the hands that were actually engaged in the navigation of the vessel. Some error on their part would from time to time distract him from his pious exercise, and call forth a torrent of the vigorous language in which the British tar of old time was wont to issue his orders; but the explosion over, this versatile seaman would meekly return

to his prayer-book as if nothing had happened. When such an outburst, Knox quaintly remarks, was followed by the familiar response of the Litany, "We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord," the effect was grotesque; the sailors indeed seemed to take these unseemly interruptions as a matter of course, but Knox and his soldiers "were greatly moved to smile."

The Major seems upon the whole to have been pleased at reaching the Acadian coast in eight weeks, and there they found the rest of the flotilla gathering in Halifax harbour. This, it should be said, was the expedition which Pitt had planned for the capture of Louisbourg on Cape Breton island, "the Dunkirk of America." But the attempt after all was not made this year. Pitt had not yet shaken himself free of the Incapables who were in charge of the British forces, and the capture of Louisbourg was reserved to crown with their first laurels Amherst and Wolfe in the succeeding year.

Great, however, was the disgust of the soldiers and sailors who thronged the half-built streets of the infant settlement of Halifax, when they heard that the enterprise was to be abandoned. Instinct told them there was bungling somewhere, and a sense of failure and disgrace disturbed the whole community. The clerk of the parish church of Halifax, says Knox, took the matter into his own hands, and on the following Sunday gave out several significant verses of the forty-fourth psalm (metrical version) and led the singing of them himself with great vigour.

O Lord, our fathers oft have told
In our attentive ears,
Thy wonders in their days performed,
And elder times than theirs.

But thou hast cast us off, and now
Most shamefully we yield,
For thou no more vouchsafest to lead
Our armies in the field.

Since when to every upstart foe
We turn our backs in fight,
And with our spoil their malice feast
Who bears us ancient spite.

This picture of the Halifax clerk, lustily joined no doubt by his congregation and the troops, singing at the General and his staff, who could neither remonstrate nor retire with dignity, is delightful. Few of our village Trojans, great as they were, ever had such an opening for their traditional quaintness and audacity as this.

The removal of the Acadians, best remembered by Longfellow's *EVANGELINE* (fanciful in fact, whatever its poetical quality may be), had only recently taken place. The Nova Scotian forests were full of outlawed refugees and hostile Indians. The French Acadian settlements, as Knox saw them, were fast relapsing into the wilderness from which they had been reclaimed, all save their orchards, whose ungarnered fruit was highly relished by the British troops, sickening in their backwoods forts on a diet of salt pork. For the Forty-Third plunged almost at once into the wilderness, charged with the task of watching the French who, from beyond the Bay of Fundy, never ceased from troubling that part of Acadia which, though for fifty years a British province, had always remained French in population. A chain of isolated forts broke at long intervals that vast solitude of forests which was washed on one side by the Bay of Fundy, and on the other by the surf of the Atlantic. Here, for nearly two years, the regiment in scattered detachments dragged out a weary exile. It was a unique and an unpleasant experience to both officers and men; for the Nova Scotian forests then were very different from the friendly and comparatively accessible solitudes of later times. Sport, the only resource of

the wilderness, was in Knox's day out of the question, for the scalp-hunter, both red and white, roamed the woods with a zeal stimulated not only by race-hatred, but by the greed of gain in the shape of large rewards. Many soldiers fell victims to their own rashness at the hands of these ruffians, and indeed bloody incidents of such a kind were about the only ones that broke the awful monotony of the life. Knox, however, plods along with his journal day after day, week after week, and he certainly gives us a vivid picture of the backwoods of America as they were in the days of the old wars. A backwoods' clearing, to be sure, is pretty much the same now as it was then in physical features. Instead of the hairy-faced, horny-handed agriculturist in his homespun suit, who is now the sole figure in the foreground, Knox fills it in for us with the long-skirted red coats, the three-cornered hats, and white leggings of King George's infantry. The surrounding forests in these days suggest nothing more formidable than a black squirrel, or a spruce-partridge, or possibly some over venturesome deer; but in those men moved beneath that endless canopy of rustling leaves or snow-laden branches with a consciousness that they carried their lives in their hands; that at any moment, swift, sure, and silent as the spring of the panther or the dart of the hawk, the pitiless savage might be upon them.

Reduced to rations of salt pork and beans with a scanty supply even of flour, without books, or any amusements but a little skating, and with no occupation but woodcutting in the forests under strong escorts, one can imagine the dreariness of those two long winters, to say nothing of the summers which were a ceaseless torture from mosquitoes. It would be odd, however, if British officers, particularly when more than half of them

were of Irish birth, did not contrive to put a cheery face on things. So in spite of the grim surroundings, noble efforts at festivity were made from time to time; on St. Patrick's Day, for instance, the Irish officers entertained their Scotch and English comrades at a grand supper. Knox gives the bill of fare, and as this was the result of an extraordinary demand on every possible source of supply, its simplicity is significant of what the officers' mess must have been on ordinary days.

The welcome release came at last, in the early spring of 1759. Louisbourg had fallen in the previous year, and the Forty-Third was ordered there to join Wolfe's memorable expedition against Quebec. The regiment had been cruelly baulked in the business for which they been sent from England. Indeed, it was long after the bells had done pealing in London over that auspicious event that Knox and his friends, though comparatively close to the scene of it, heard the news of the victory. A Yankee sloop came drifting one day past their solitary port upon the Bay of Fundy, and the whole garrison crowded down to the shore eager for news. When they shouted to the skipper for tidings from Louisbourg, "our poor, simply honest New England man," as the Major (who had evidently not as yet much experience of those innocents) calls him, thought he was being jeered at, such ancient history had the affair by now become, and refused to answer. "D—n you, pumpkin, can't you speak?" shouted out an excited sergeant. Then, when the Yankee realised the situation and told the troops that Louisbourg had fallen weeks ago, every hat was flung into the air, says Knox, and the entire garrison shouted for joy.

When the Forty-Third reached

Louisbourg after their long banishment they found a busy and animated scene. Regiments were gathering there from all quarters. The shattered masonry of the French walls and bastions bore evidence to the terrific hammering of the English guns in the preceding summer. Wolfe was already there, and amid the scenes of his late triumph was busily preparing for another and a greater one. Knox, eager and delighted to be once more amid the bustle of life, found Wolfe inspecting the regiments one by one in the new exercises. The commanding officers of corps that had been rusticated in the backwoods of Nova Scotia and New York looked with dismay on these elaborate movements, and dreading the moment when their turn should come anticipated Wolfe's criticism by privately requesting his indulgence for shortcomings which would be no fault of theirs. "New exercise?" said the most rigid disciplinarian in the British army. "New, fiddlestick! As long as your men are well disciplined and will fight, that's all I shall require of them."

It was with the end, however, rather than the beginning of Knox's journal that we proposed to deal in this paper, or at least to use as a pretext for some few notes on an episode in British history that is very generally forgotten. The capture of Quebec and the death of Wolfe upon the Plains of Abraham make such a glorious landmark in our annals, that it has practically obscured the twelve months of by no means bloodless warfare that followed it. People are apt to forget that, though Wolfe's victory decided the fate of Canada, and indeed of America, for all time, it was not the end of the struggle. The final siege of Quebec, when the English were the defenders and the French with numbers infinitely superior were the assailants, was an exploit in no way unworthy of the

fierce and picturesque war of which it formed the closing scene. We must pass over, therefore, the old pages which tell of Knox's daily doings, as he lay with Wolfe before Quebec through the stirring summer of 1759, and follow him on to the Plains of Abraham, fighting with his own regiment in the centre of the front line in that decisive struggle. He is writing now in the later days of autumn, and a great quiet has fallen upon the scene of the recent victory. The French armies in Canada have not only suffered defeat but humiliation. They had been beaten before; but on the Plains of Abraham they had lost for a brief space their very wits, many of them indeed, to all seeming, the courage and devotion which had never before in any circumstances failed them.

The British fleet, carrying with it the dead body of their victorious general, had left Quebec in October. The city was little more than a mass of ruins; roofless buildings and crumbling walls everywhere told the tale of Wolfe's terrible artillery. The warning voice of the northern winter was already heard moaning in the almost naked forests, and whistling through the battered streets. The waves of the St. Lawrence were tumbling in farewell frolic upon the Isle of Orleans; the chill breath of November was already crisping the shallow backwaters and woodland brooks; flurries of snow were whirling fitfully from gray skies; and within the ruined city over six thousand soldiers, and as many citizens, had to find shelter somewhere, and to face not only the winter, but a siege as well. For neither by land nor sea could relief now reach the British garrison. The enemy, smarting under a keen sense of disgrace, and burning to retrieve it, were gathering under the brave and skilful Levis at Jacques Cartier, some eighteen miles

only up the river. The militia, it is true, were scattered, and demoralised, but a formidable fraction of them still remained under arms and more would join. "Who the deuce was thinking of Quebec?" says Horace Walpole, when a few weeks later critical news arrived in London; "It is like the page of a book one has turned over and done with." Walpole's remark might be that of most of us to-day, as we turn over the pages of history and come upon the last chapter of Anglo-Canadian warfare.

The position of the garrison in November was one of hardship and discomfort, but not in a military sense of more than normal anxiety. By the end of the winter, however, disease and death had materially altered its situation. Knox had considered himself fortunate in finding a stable to live in, and still more so in his removal to the command of the general hospital a mile out of the town. Here large numbers of French and English wounded were being devotedly nursed by the Sisters, for whose behaviour the English Major expresses unbounded admiration. He spends quite a pleasant time in the society of French officers, directors, and ladies of the religious orders, who keep up their spirits in a wonderful fashion till the war is mentioned, and then "mirth changes to sighs and piteous exclamations of *oh mon Dieu!*" Knox could understand French, so, when his Gallic friends discovered this, they would exchange confidences in Latin, till the humorous Major threw consternation among them one day in the shape of a long and apt quotation from Virgil. He finally and entirely won their hearts by producing some most excellent port. The Mother Superior was so taken by her foreign commandant that she asked him to an English breakfast, where the Major, solemnly seated at a small table by himself in

the middle of a large bare room, ate thick bread and butter and drank tea, while the pious ladies waited on him.

Within Quebec strict order was kept by Murray who was in command. Shelter of some sort was gradually provided both for garrison and citizens. The latter began to recover their spirits and were wonderfully civil towards their conquerors, reserving their anathemas for the Marquis de Vaudreuil. Murray published a manifesto to the Canadians urging them to keep their oath of fealty to King George, and promising them equal treatment with British citizens. All insults to Canadians were at the same time promptly punished, and among other things officers were ordered to take off their hats to religious processions. On the other hand, strict law was enforced in the city; and its impartiality was forcibly illustrated by the hanging upon the same day of an Englishman for robbing a Frenchman and of a Frenchman for inciting British soldiers to desert. With December the fierce Canadian winter set in with full severity. The garrison, ill provided with suitable clothing, suffered greatly from exposure and frost-bite; food was short, and with neither fresh meat nor vegetables beyond what were required for the sick and wounded, scurvy and dysentery soon began to make inroads on the small British garrison. There was a great deal of liquor, too, in the town which, though useful in one sense, in another added greatly to Murray's difficulties. The making of snow-shoes and the training of soldiers to use them were a conspicuous part of the daily routine; but the most important and difficult work of all was the cutting and hauling of firewood from the neighbouring forests. The latter was still full of Indian and Canadian scalp-hunters. No wood-cutting or foraging party could venture

two miles from the walls except in force and strongly armed. There were no horses left, and long trains of soldiers harnessed to loaded sleighs could be seen continually crossing and recrossing the Plains of Abraham. Levis, with a force that rumour placed as high as fourteen thousand, was constantly skirmishing with Murray's troops in the neighbourhood of the city; on one occasion he attacked Point Levis with a thousand men, but was repulsed by a body of British troops and New England rangers that were despatched over the frozen waters of the St. Lawrence. He had made up his mind to defy the winter and attempt to carry the city by storm; he could send against it at least ten thousand men, while the garrison had shrunk by sickness to five thousand and was yet to shrink still more. But Levis's troops were enduring even greater hardships than Murray's and were still worse off for provisions; as a matter of fact they were on half-rations the whole winter, and that they kept the field at all does their courage and patriotism the greatest credit.

The only vulnerable side of Quebec was on the Plains of Abraham, where Wolfe had attacked it. Its defences here were very weak, and the frozen ground had prevented Murray from using either pick or spade in their improvement. Levis indeed had declared he would eat his Christmas dinner in the city; but Christmas had come and gone and all January, and he had not yet ventured to attack even those indifferent fortifications, while Wolfe's veterans lay behind them. He now, however, caused walls of snow to be built and scaling-ladders made with which he practised his men; an experiment which proved somewhat costly in broken limbs. The regulars were eager for a general attack; but Levis, mistrusting his

militia, postponed the attempt till the opening of spring, contenting himself with hemming the British into the immediate neighbourhood of the city and harassing them throughout the winter. "Wonderful reports," says Knox, "were industriously circulated by the French leaders to keep up the spirits of their army; and of that part of Canada above Quebec which was still in French hands. The Grand Monarque had sunk or burned the greatest fleet England had ever sent out. He had conquered Ireland, and put all troops and natives found in arms to the sword. The next mail would certainly bring news of peace, and the restoration of Canada to France",—and much more to the same effect. The credulity and vanity of the French Canadian were boundless, shaken though they had been by Wolfe's smashing blow. The light-hearted French commander sent a message to Murray offering to bet five hundred louis that a French fleet would be up the river in the spring before an English one. "I have no wish," replied Murray, "to win your money, for I have not the slightest doubt but that I shall have the pleasure of embarking your Excellency, and the remains of your half-starved army, in British bottoms before the end of the season."

Sickness still continued to play fearful havoc, and Murray's effective numbers sank so low that his position became perilous, especially if a French fleet should make its appearance on the first opening of the river. Early in April the winter began to break, the air to soften, and the burial of hundreds of soldiers, who had died during the siege, and whose bodies had been temporarily laid in the snow, became a necessary operation, though a difficult one, for the ground was still hard frozen beneath the surface. On the 19th some of the garrison saw what

they thought to be the corpse of a man floating down the river on an ice-floe. A boat was launched, and the body proved to be that of a French gunner, whose pulse, however, was still beating. On being brought into Quebec the rescued man was soon able to explain how he had been upset in a boat up the river, and had managed to scramble on to the drifting ice, where he had lain for some hours unconscious from cold and exposure; but what was more important he gave Murray particulars of Levis's strength and of his plans. The former with some exaggeration he quoted at twelve thousand; in the latter he was correct, and they were to the effect that the French army was in full march on the city. Murray now prepared for action. Out of his original force of six thousand five hundred only three thousand were available for the field, and some of these volunteered from the hospitals; the rest were either dead or sick. Every man rose to the occasion; invalids, who could barely crawl about, begged for arms, and even women and children worked hard at filling the sandbags. On the 28th the French army appeared in sight of Murray's outposts beyond the Plains of Abraham, and on the same day the English general marched out to meet them with his small but yet confident army. The Forty-Eighth, the Fifteenth, and the second battalion of the Sixtieth were upon the right under Colonel Barton, while with Frazer on the left went his own Highlanders (the Seventy-Eighth), the Twenty-Eighth, and the Forty-Seventh. In the centre of the front line was our friend the Major with the Forty-Third, and by their side marched the Fifty-Eighth. Behind came the Thirty-Fifth and the third battalion of the Sixtieth; while on either flank were Dalling's Light Infantry, the New England Rangers, and some volunteers.

"Thus," says Knox, "did our little

army advance, weak in point of numbers with that of the French, but powerful in every other respect, and having an enemy to encounter, who by frequent experience and repeated trials were unaccustomed to stand long before us." Twenty cannon were dragged by five hundred men, and as the wet dawn cleared into the damp chill of an April morning, the British troops found themselves in front of the enemy. If these indomitable soldiers had needed inspiration, they should have found it where they stood; they were treading upon the very ground from which they had driven this same foe in headlong rout but seven months earlier. And indeed they needed all their courage; for Levis had in all with him over nine thousand men, and he brought nearly seven thousand into action. The French were thirsting for revenge, and a great victory might yet save Canada. Murray was young and courageous, but not too prudent; the glory of Wolfe had dazzled him, and the scene upon which he found himself stirred him to a rash emulation. He had an admirable position; his left rested on the precipice up which Wolfe had climbed, his right touched the thickets which lined the slope down to the St. Charles; but he was not content to remain in it. The French, not yet formed, were still filing in columns out of the woods of Sillery. The English guns opened on them, and occasioning some confusion Murray took it for a retreat, and, ordering a general advance, abandoned a position whose strength could alone have offered him any chance of success against such overwhelming odds. The ground over which his veterans pushed forward, with many misgivings of a tactical nature but without a moment's hesitation, was naturally uneven, and at this time heavy with melting snow and standing water. Long stretches

of dreary dripping woods faced them, and thickets began to flank them as they advanced towards the enemy. The guns stuck in the slush, and the right wing soon found themselves floundering in a swamp, while the French in front of them had occupied a strong position known as the Mill of Dumont. Here some buildings were held by the French Grenadiers, and against these the British Light Infantry threw themselves with magnificent impetuosity. After a fierce struggle the French gave way, and the English dashing out in pursuit, were carried by their ardour into the very jaws of a fresh force which instantly charged them with courage and spirit. The broken ranks of the Light Infantry were hurled back upon the English lines with so severe a loss that they were thenceforward practically out of the fight. In the meantime the rest of the British right pushed on to the Mill of Dumont, and another desperate struggle for the possession of the buildings took place in which the French were the victors. Yet it was only for a brief time. The Forty-Eighth, the Fifteenth, and the Royal Americans, making a grand effort against overwhelming odds, once more carried the position. Ammunition however failing, owing to the waggons sticking fast in the swampy ground, the whole right wing had at last to fall back, though when the order was given the pride of Wolfe's veterans burst out in bitter curses; "D—— it, what is falling back but retreating!" they called out, as amid a hot fire from the woods in front and flank they sullenly executed a manœuvre that was new to them.

The left wing had fared no better. Pushed rashly on to the edge of the woods by Murray, they soon found themselves the object of a murderous and steadily increasing fire, which the

French poured in on their front and flanks. The men were in a false position; to attempt the woods against odds that were already nearly two to one, and shortly became as five to two, was madness; yet retreat they would not. It was only when the French, with a fury that coupled with their numerical superiority made resistance hopeless, attacked them on three sides that the Highlanders and Infantry of the left wing fell back. The whole British army was now in full retreat. Levis thought at first it was a rout, and that another chase might take place over the Plains of Abraham under reversed conditions; but he soon saw his mistake, and prudently recalled his victorious troops from further conflict with an enemy that though beaten was still dangerous. The battle, which is known as St. Foy from the spot on which it took place, lasted two hours. The British lost a thousand men, or one third of the number they took into action. Their cannon, which Murray's tactics had rendered useless for the latter part of the fight, were hopelessly bogged, and had to be spiked and abandoned. A considerable portion of the English wounded was also left on the field; and upon these unfortunate men those precious products of the Catholic Church, the Mission Indians, swooped down with tomahawk and scalping-knife. If the French closed their Canadian record by a display of spirit worthy of their ancient renown, they sullied the exploit by the cruel indifference to the barbarities of their Indian allies which had so often disgraced them. They themselves had lost nearly a thousand men. Their militia this time had not only fought well in their native element, the woodlands, but had behaved with spirit in the open. In addition to their militia, however, the French had three thousand regulars, a number

equal to the whole of Murray's army, and than these old veterans of Montcalm there were no better troops in the world; unless it were those incomparable battalions of the dead Wolfe, whose remnants were now sullenly preparing to stand at bay behind the weak defences of Quebec.

There is something eminently dramatic in this closing struggle between the survivors of the brave men who had fought and bled under two such captains as Wolfe and Montcalm, and this too upon the very spot where both had fallen. The former had lain for five months in his tomb beneath the flagstones of Greenwich church; the latter was resting within musket-shot beneath the floor of the chapel of the Ursulines. If ever the silence of the grave could be reached by the sounds of human rapture or human woe, the triumphant shouts of Montcalm's soldiers should have surely pierced the shell-riven cavity where their dead general lay. It was indeed a different scene from that gray morning in the previous September when the troops of France were being chased in head-long rout over the same bloodstained ground; but the sequel, too, was widely different. A large French army, paralysed by Wolfe's audacity, had then abandoned Quebec to a greatly inferior enemy; now the beaten army that retired into Quebec was a British one, and as before vastly outnumbered by its opponents. So far, however, from any thoughts of surrender, the small garrison which now lined the weak western defences of the city only expressed the hope, in quaint and forcible language, that the French would attack them. Murray had now two thousand men fit for duty; the French had three times that number before the city, and further supports from up the river to draw upon. The English general's position was critical, but he had no

thought of despair. Murray indeed atoned nobly for the rashness of St. Foy. Men and officers toiled night and day at the defences; the women filled sandbags and the invalids crawled from their sick beds to aid them. The city was well supplied with heavy guns, and these by great exertions were dragged into position. But Levis shrank from an immediate assault and began to fortify himself upon the Plains of Abraham; he was very short of cannon, and the few he possessed had to be hauled up the Anse du Foulon. In a fortnight the indefatigable garrison had one hundred and fifty heavy guns mounted, and were plunging shot and shell into the enemy's trenches. But the British were failing both in health and supplies; the arrival of a French fleet would be fatal to them, and a French fleet was expected. An English fleet, however, and perhaps with more reason, was believed also to be on the way.

The flag which first fluttered over the woods of Orleans would indicate to a certainty the fate of Quebec. The shores of the river, as may be supposed, were alive with rumours. First it was French ships that had been descried off the Saguenay; then it was an English frigate beating up the gulf; now the spirits of the beleaguered Britons, now those of the besieging French, were stirred to fever heat. At last, on the 9th of May, a ship of war, that had been preceded by no rumours false or true, sailed right into the basin of Quebec. Crowds of men and officers, invalids and citizens, thronged the ramparts in anxious suspense as to her nationality. They had not long to wait; so soon as she was abreast of the city, the British ensign was run up to her peak, and she opened a salute of twenty-one guns. "The gladness of the worn and half-famished troops," says Knox, "was not to be expressed. Both officers and

soldiers mounted the parapet in face of the enemy and huzza'd with their hats in the air for the space of nearly an hour." The ship was the *Lowestoft*, and she brought the news that a British squadron was beating up the *St. Lawrence*. Quebec was saved; for Levis depended wholly upon his own small fleet up the river for his scanty supplies, and the English war-ships would destroy these at the first contact. It was now the 15th of May; Levis's guns had been knocked out of position by the British artillery as fast as he mounted them, and three British battle-ships were already in the harbour. He had six thousand men with him, and he might yet attempt to carry the city by assault. It was now or never! But the longer the militia looked at it, the less they liked it, though the regulars were eager to attack. The French ships were destroyed on the 16th, after a brave but hopeless resistance, and almost before the garrison of Quebec was aware of it, the French army had vanished. The English batteries, says Knox, in a transport of joy and triumph rather than with serious intent, opened with a deafening roar and sent hundreds of cannon-balls bounding through the darkness over the Plains of Abraham

on the heels of the retreating French, who left their sick and wounded and all their baggage behind them.

The last crisis in the conquest of Canada was over. Montreal now remained the final rallying-point of French dominion, and thither English forces were already concentrating. The final blow was only a question of time, and it was delivered in September, when Amherst with seventeen thousand men sat down before what then existed of the modern metropolis of British North America. The militia of Canada was now scattered to the four winds. Amid a motley crowd of panic-stricken non-combatants and a cynical concourse of Indian spectators were two thousand five hundred regulars, who still called on Levis to fight to the last. Such futile valour was perhaps not quite serious; at any rate it succumbed to the blunt ultimatum of Amherst. Within a day or two of a year since Wolfe died on the Plains of Abraham, Vaudreuil signed those conditions by which Canada was finally surrendered to Great Britain; and the worthy Knox, having done his duty alike with sword and pen, laid down at the same time both one and the other.

THE IRRESPONSIBLE NOVELIST.

BY AN INDOLENT REVIEWER.

THERE is a popular, but on the whole an erroneous, notion that hostile criticism proceeds of personal malice. The severest criticisms probably are written by conscientious young persons with high literary ideals and little acquaintance with the world. A late French critic, M. Désiré Nisard, put on record his own dolorous experience, which no doubt has been the experience of many. As a beginner, alone in the proverbial garret, he devoted to his criticisms earnest study and a jealous regard for the honour of letters. By degrees he made a name, became known, began to receive invitations. The books he had criticised he had regarded simply as books. To his surprise and chagrin he met them now in society as angry and unforgiving men and women. Authors he had censured were constrained in his presence; their wives would not meet him at dinner. Few classes surely are so unhappy as to incur on grounds so impersonal such strong personal resentments.

The perils amid which the reviewer plies his harmless, if unnecessary, trade are vividly illustrated by an amusing story in a recent book by Dr. Wright on *THE BRONTËS IN IRELAND*. Charlotte Brontë sent an early copy of *JANE EYRE* to her Irish uncle Hugh. The book was received in the family circle with misgiving; the instinct of the blood-relation suggested that niece Charlotte had probably made a fool of herself. To know the worst Hugh Brontë set off to the Ballynaskeagh Manse to take the opinion of the Rev. David McKee, an old friend of the

family and the literary oracle of the neighbourhood. For once the oracle was neither dumb nor doubtful. "Hughy," thus it spake, "the book bears the Brontë stamp on every sentence and idea, and it is the grandest novel that has been produced in my time." Hugh Brontë wrung the parson's hand and departed, no longer despondent but elated. Charlotte's book was something for the relations to boast of, and not to be ashamed of. And boast they did, you may depend upon it, until no doubt the name of Currer Bell became the bugbear of the place. At length, at the zenith of the family triumph, came the notorious article on *JANE EYRE* in *THE QUARTERLY REVIEW*. The neighbours naturally relieved their feelings in gossip. So this wonderful niece of Hugh Brontë was after all, it seemed, a "bad woman,"—that was the popular version at Ballynaskeagh of the critic's judgment. You conceive the wrath of the relations. Uncle Hugh, with something of *WUTHERING HEIGHTS* in his Brontë blood, felt himself called to be the avenger of the outraged family honour. Of the solemnities with which he prepared his blackthorn, and therewith set forth on his mission of vengeance, you may read a spirited account in Dr. Wright's pages. He called at Haworth for a blessing on his undertaking. Charlotte, like a sensible girl, endeavoured to dissuade him, and so did her father as befitted a Christian clergyman. Gentle sister Anne, however, blessed the Avenger and bade him good speed. So up to London he went, and raged round the metropolis

with his blackthorn in quest of the reviewer. He never succeeded in unearthing him, and had to return to Ballynaskeagh with a blackthorn unbaptized in the enemy's blood. At Murray's he saw more than once a personage said to be the editor. If it was Lockhart, it was probably the man he was in search of; but Hugh Brontë, clutching his blackthorn, would deliver his private message to none but the declared reviewer. Well-informed literary persons naturally were forward with the desired information. Some knew the reviewer to be Thackeray, others were sure that it was Dickens, George Henry Lewes, Harriet Martineau. Happily the Avenger mistrusted the information. It would have been an unfortunate exhibition of the workings of anonymity had Dickens or Thackeray got his crown cracked by the frantic Irish relative of an anonymous novelist for the sins of an anonymous reviewer. The secret of the authorship of the review has been loyally kept by the house of Murray to this day, but there is little doubt that it was the work of Lady Eastlake, then Miss Rigby. The current theory, however, is that the offending passages were editorial interpolations, which may be recognised as out of harmony with the general tenor of the article. This theory was first put forward some three years ago in *THE DAILY NEWS*; and Dr. Wright has come independently to the same conclusion. If, as would be probable, the interpolations were Lockhart's, the apparition of Hugh Brontë and his blackthorn may have served him for a salutary reminder of the just bounds of criticism.

For I am not here to apologise for this reviewer. His offence has stirred the bile of the urbane Mr. Birrell, and may justly be left to the torment of Mr. Swinburne's alliterative damnation.

Nor indeed am I so rash as to hold a brief for the reviewer in general, whose case is of course past pleading. Yet if the story of Hugh Brontë illustrates vividly the risks of the reviewer, JANE EYRE illustrates, on the other hand, the license of the novelist. If it comes to a question of hurting folks' feelings, Charlotte Brontë had herself a great deal to answer for. No reader of JANE EYRE is likely to forget the Lowood Institution; well, no sooner did the novel reach Yorkshire than Lowood was identified with the Cowan Bridge School for the children of the clergy, and its founder, the Rev. Mr. Brocklehurst, with the real founder of the real school, the Rev. William Carus Wilson. And very pleasant reading the novel made for this philanthropic clergyman in his old age and years of declining health. The school for the children of the clergy had been the darling scheme of his life. He had sympathised deeply with the extreme difficulty experienced by clergymen, with their limited incomes, in providing for the education of their children; and had devised this scheme of a school to be supported partly by subscriptions, where girls might receive a sound education for £14 a year. For more than a quarter of a century he worked for it and watched over it with unremitting zeal and self-denial, to find in the end himself and his school represented in a romance, read from one end of the country to the other, as something akin to Squeers and his Dotheboys' Hall. That Mr. Wilson was guilty of any fault of omission or commission in the management of the school, there is, so far as I can make out, no evidence to prove and a good deal to contradict. Mr. Wilson, though taking upon him the chief management, was only one of twelve trustees, and none of these gentlemen throughout Mr. Wilson's twenty-seven years' management ap-

pears to have received any complaint. Indeed, apart from the misdeeds of one dirty cook (whom he dismissed), and of one cross governess, Miss Brontë herself had nothing to allege; and it was admitted by all witnesses that, in an uphill work of charity, Mr. Wilson's management was both generous and watchful. The intensity of Charlotte Brontë's bitterness it is quite easy to understand; her sister Maria died at the school, and to watch a dying sister sickening over unpalatable food or subjected to the nagging of a governess, is a cruel experience for a child of eight or nine. The recollection of it bit into her intensely personal and brooding imagination; and nearly a quarter of a century later the philanthropic clergyman was punished for having entertained unawares that dangerous angel, a future novelist. Miss Brontë told Mrs. Gaskell more than once that she would not have written what she did of Lowood in *JANE EYRE* if she had thought the place would have been so immediately identified with Cowan Bridge. She added that she had not considered it necessary, in a work of fiction, to state every particular with the impartiality that might be required in a court of justice, nor to seek out motives and make allowances for human failings, as she might have done if dispassionately analysing the conduct of those who had the superintendence of the institution. Here precisely lies the danger of this license of the novelist. It is this absolute irresponsibility of the romancer, this privilege of selecting the facts and imputing the motives, which, added to the artistic gift for deepening the shadows and heightening the effect, makes the novel so far-reaching and so irresistible a libel.

One would perhaps attach more weight to Miss Brontë's expression of regret for the wrong done to Mr. Wilson if she had shown herself more

scrupulous in her handling of living people in her subsequent novels. But what is one to say of the treatment of the curates in *SHIRLEY*, or of Madame Héger in *VILLETTE*? Curates, like many other amiable and useful servants of the community, have long dwelt in the cold shadow of romance; and when, as in this case, the romancer was doubled with the rector's daughter, these unfortunate young men naturally stood scant chance of humane treatment. Yet when Miss Brontë was not sharpening her pen for a biting portrait, she had eyes for merits outweighing manners even in a curate of Haworth. The militant Puseyism of these curates had provoked, you may remember, a quarrel in the parish over Church rates. The undaunted Puseyites defied the schismatics to come to church to hear them preach. The challenge, oddly enough, was accepted; the chapels were closed, and "a keener, cleverer, bolder, and more heart-stirring harangue" than that which one of these Anglican champions delivered from Haworth pulpit that Sunday evening, Miss Brontë had never heard. "He did not rant," she wrote to a friend, "he did not cant, he did not whine, he did not sniggle; he just got up and spoke with the boldness of a man impressed with the truth of what he was saying, who has no fear of his enemies and no dread of consequences." Nevertheless their heroism in the pulpit availed the curates nothing when their characters were required by the novelist for "copy."

A review of *SHIRLEY* appeared in *THE TIMES* when Miss Brontë was staying in London with her publishers. It was severe, and the paper was hidden lest it should spoil the day's enjoyment. Miss Brontë guessed the truth and persisted in her request to be shown the criticism. She tried to hide her face between the large sheets,

but her companion could not help becoming aware of tears stealing down the face and dropping on the lap. I suppose nobody who has read the incident would like to have been the reviewer; yet the reviewer at least was severe only on what had deliberately challenged a public judgment. The novelist, on the other hand, had deliberately pilloried the failings of private persons, which were not public property at all, and had exposed them to the derision of their friends and the world. When one remembers Mrs. Ritchie's half ludicrous, half pathetic account of Miss Brontë's own behaviour as a lioness at Thackeray's party, one is tempted, quite apart from considerations of good taste and good feeling, to question her right to be satirical in the matter of manners even at the expense of her father's curates. She was quite aware how badly she had treated them. "Even the curates, poor fellows," she wrote, "show no resentment; each characteristically finds solace for his own wounds in crowing over his brethren." Not a hint of remorse or repentance, I am afraid; on the contrary, when these good fellows took it laughing instead of crying, she is in her superior way quite scornful of their insensibility. Because "Mr. Donne" forgave her, she wrote: "Some people's natures are veritable enigmas: I quite expected to have had one good scene at least with him; but as yet nothing of the sort has occurred."

Does not after all the impersonal and responsible reviewer compare favourably with the personal and irresponsible novelist? The writer in *THE QUARTERLY REVIEW* did not know the anonymous author of *JANE EYRE* from the man in the moon. If Lockhart interpolated the offending observations, he did so at least merely in mistaken loyalty to the traditions

of the Review and from an honest dislike of revolutionary sentiment in the relations of the sexes. After all, apart from one unwarrantable personal insinuation, he only said publicly and curtly what Harriet Martineau said privately and with management when Charlotte Brontë adjured her as a friend to speak frankly. We now know that Charlotte Brontë was the most old-maidenly of *Revolting Women*; yet strange as it may seem to a generation privileged to peruse the productions of the Pioneer Club, our parents and grandparents did actually consider *Jane Eyre* and *Lucy Snowe* indelicate.

Of course a certain usage of their friends by novelists is legitimate in fiction and indeed inevitable. Sir Walter Scott borrowed from his father for old Fairford, and for the young one from William Clerk, and he made use of Laidlaw more than once; but Scott was a great gentleman as well as a great writer; his unerring tact and kindly heart kept him always on the safe side and void of all offence. Charlotte Brontë drew her heroine Shirley from her sister Emily whom she idolised. So long indeed as the painter but adds an aureole, nobody is aggrieved; the trouble begins when the portrait is unamiable as well as recognisable. The aunt of George Eliot, who was the original of Dinah Morris, had no ground of complaint, and Caleb Garth might be accepted by the novelist's father with tolerable equanimity; but it will be agreed on the other hand, that however disagreeable a young gentleman Master Isaac Evans may have been, his sister was more than even with him when she presented him to the world as Tom Tulliver. Where novels are autobiographical (and probably half the novels written are more or less autobiographical) there is necessarily with the self-portraiture some portraiture

of relations and friends. In DAVID COPPERFIELD, which is frankly autobiographical, we have it on the authority of the minute German critic, that even "die Schwester von Mealy Potatoes, who did imps in the pantomime, ist ebenfals historisch." To the self-portraiture in PENDENNIS Thackeray pleaded guilty by sketching his own features in an illustration of his not too heroic hero. It was Thackeray's usage of his friends, as subjects for both pen and pencil, which led Edmund Yates to consider himself justified in making Thackeray himself the subject of an early essay in personal journalism. The story is familiar, and has so recently been recalled to the public recollection, that it is unnecessary to repeat it here, pertinent as it is to the matter in hand. When Thackeray resented Yates's "pen-and-ink portrait," the latter's impulse was to retort with a *tu quoque*; but his purpose was overruled by Charles Dickens, whose advice he asked and followed.

If indeed Dickens had consented to be accessory to Yates's retort, it certainly would have been curious, considering his own license in this particular line. Probably the most famous case in the record is the case of Harold Skimpole and Leigh Hunt. Nor was that by any means Dickens's first offence. I pass over the unfortunate Yorkshire schoolmasters who were ruined or made wretched by Dickens's delineations of Squeers and Dotheboys' Hall, because no doubt where a guilty class has to be exposed the innocent must sometimes suffer. But take the case of Fang in OLIVER TWIST, and read this letter which the novelist wrote to a Mr. Haines who at that time superintended the police-reports for the Press: "In my next number of OLIVER TWIST," wrote Dickens, "I must have a magistrate; and casting about for a magistrate

whose harshness and insolence would render him a fit subject to be *shown up*, I have, as a necessary consequence, stumbled upon Mr. Laing of Hatton Garden celebrity. I know the man's character perfectly well; but as it would be necessary to describe his personal appearance also, I ought to have seen him, which (fortunately or unfortunately as the case may be), I have never done. In this dilemma it occurred to me that perhaps I might under your auspices be smuggled into the Hatton Garden office for a few moments some morning."

Let the police-magistrate have been what you will, I call that rather an ugly letter. Nor is it reassuring to be told that after the magistrate had been "brought up" before the novelist, the Home Secretary found it an easy and "popular" step to remove Mr. Laing from the Bench. If there is a public evil, it should be the business of some more responsible authority to look to it than the popular novelist. The novelist is under too great temptations to make his characters dramatic and telling. Dickens confessed the temptation, when he had no excuse of public zeal to offer. After the twenty-second chapter of DAVID COPPERFIELD had appeared in the serial form, Dickens received by post a piteous protest from the poor little Miss Mowcher of real life. The novelist had to confess he had enjoyed the fun of copying closely peculiarities of figure and face amounting to physical deformity of a grotesque little oddity among his acquaintance. He did not stop to consider that it was cruel fun for the victim. When her cry reached him he was shocked, and made some amends for the pain he had inflicted. But the most notorious case, as I have said, was Skimpole. Leigh Hunt was cruelly hurt by the caricature. Dickens knew perfectly well he was

doing wrong, and confessed that again he had succumbed to the novelist's temptation. He said that he often grieved afterwards to think he had yielded to the inducement of making the character speak like an old friend, for the pleasure it afforded him to find a delightful manner reproducing itself under his hand. Leigh Hunt himself did not at first recognise the portrait, and very much enjoyed the picture; but when good-natured friends explained things, as good-natured friends do, he suffered keenly. Dickens was his good friend, who had done this thing. In vain Dickens tried to comfort him: "Separate," he said to him, "in your own mind, what you see of yourself in Skimpole, from what other people tell you they see." Cold comfort this! Hunt's grievance was that the public did, and posterity would, take Skimpole's character for his own, trait for trait. "Every one in writing," Dickens went on to plead, "must speak from points of his experience, and so I of mine with you; but when I felt it was going too close, I stopped myself, and the most blotted parts of my manuscript are those in which I have been striving hard to make the impression I was writing from *unlike* you." Here surely is even more confession than defence. Of course what Dicken says is perfectly true. He was but doing what all the novelists have done; and the testimony of the great novelists is unanimous, that genius never merely copies from life, but always idealises and combines.

What Dickens said, Charlotte Brontë said likewise. "You are not to suppose any of the characters in *SHIRLEY* intended as literal portraits. It would not suit the rules of art nor of my own feelings to write in that style. We only suffer reality to *suggest*, never to dictate." And as it was back to the days of Fielding, so we

are told is it down to the days of Dodo. Even the misguided manufacturer of *romans à clef* trims and twists. M. Daudet assured Gambetta that had he really meant Numa Roumestan for him, he would have made him so like that there should have been no possibility of mistake. The mischief is that genius has a knack of making the borrowed traits twice as natural as life, till the average man recognises the likeness a mile off. And then the differences which the author emphasises in order to prove that the picture is no portrait serve only to aggravate the libel. It is easy enough for criticism to discriminate how much in Skimpole is Leigh Hunt, and how much not; but unfortunately the general public is not critical, and the result has been that Dickens did his friend a more lasting injury than did all his enemies from the "fat Adonis of forty" downwards. Seeing that Micawber was drawn from Dickens's own father, and Mrs. Nickleby from his mother, it is little wonder that the novelist could not restrain himself to spare his friends.

These libels of genius are doubly embarrassing to the victim. The author vexes him from a high sense of literary obligation; and the victim is in no position to complain, for a complaint serves only to publish his shame, and is taken for an admission that the dramatic villain or picturesque fool of the author's imagination is a recognisable portrait. If the real Parson Adams had been so foolish as to take Fielding's portrait in bad part, a charitable world would certainly have assumed that there was much discreditable truth behind that queer story of his being found in Mrs. Slipslop's bedroom. I pass over the flagrant case of Disraeli, for indeed the calendar of the novelist's offences in this kind is inexhaustible, and I

have quoted enough examples for my purpose. I have cited familiar examples, just because they are familiar, and because if I attacked later and lesser cases (of which there is assuredly no lack) these precedents would be quoted against me. Besides, familiar as these cases are, we have for the most part heard the stories from one side only. Only the novelist's advocate has his say, and the jury is packed with delighted and grateful readers. The reader is tempted to think it expedient that one little cripple should wince and smart in order that the world may crack its sides in laughter over Dickens's caricature. Well, we have been admonished not to blend our pleasure or our pride with sorrow of the meanest thing that feels; and even the obscurest victim of the most brilliant novelist deserves some sympathetic consideration. Not all the brilliant things in *BLEAK HOUSE* atone for the wrong done to Leigh Hunt; and the world, to speak frankly, could have got along a good deal better without *JANE EYRE* and *SHIRLEY* than without the self-denying work of such humble persons as were food for Miss Brontë's genius.

The examples are old, but the moral is not. Unless I am mistaken there is a notable tendency to personality in the fiction of the day. A smart young writer gave us the other day a smart young novel about a South African politician who emerged into the ken of the British public, offering in one closed hand a new empire, and asking with the other hand opened for three millions sterling for his South African Company. When other details are added, such as personal negotiations with German statesmen and a fixed choice of celibate lieutenants, is it the fault of a guileless public if it imagines that in the story of Mrs. Dennison it is reading the secret of the obstinate bachelorhood of perhaps the most con-

spicuous Englishman alive on the globe? Another novel that I read soon after this one was about a famous African traveller and explorer who got into trouble about his treatment of the Blacks, married a lady well known for her independent spirit and her sketches of street Arabs, and on his marriage abandoned travel for politics. It would not be easy to indicate a well-known couple much more closely. Any tolerably wide reader of current novels could lengthen the list at will.

For the present prevalence of the fashion there can be no doubt that the success of Mr. Benson's *Dodo* is largely responsible. We all know that *Dodo* was not the lady that she was supposed to be; but we all know also that everybody said that she was, and that this rumour had a great deal to do with the success of the book. To some extent again the fashion is part of a general drift, and of a growth of personal curiosity and a relaxation of the sense of respect due to privacy, which is possibly a concession to the democratic sentiment, "Tis right," as Tennyson sang with angry irony, "the many-headed beast should know." In fiction another influence has been the not overwise talk about "documents" and "naturalism" mimicked from our neighbours across the Channel. Was it the solemn talk about "documents" among the literary set that met at the Magny dinners, or was it indulgence in native malice which degraded M. Daudet's originally pretty talent to the level of the license of his long list of *romans à clef*? *L'IMMORTEL* certainly seems to point to original sin. M. Zola himself has taken to writing what may be called contemporary historical novels, which seem to me to have all the disadvantages of the old historical romance and none of its advantages. It is impossible

not to feel commiseration for the real personages who have figured in them. Professed historians may make mistakes; indeed, one need feel no superstitious belief in the absolute accuracy of any of them, even those of the latest and most approved scientific brand. But at least the historian errs at the risk of his reputation. The novelist is quite irresponsible (for nobody now, I suppose, takes very seriously the realism of the Realist), and he leads his uncritical public by the nose.

It is not the eminent personages, however, who are so deserving of pity as humbler private folk. Public characters must take their chance of public comment; and if they are wronged they have at all events a hope of rehabilitation. Or when literary persons prey on each other, when for example George Sand (that emancipatress of men, as Heine called her) told tales of Alfred de Musset in *ELLE ET LUI*, and Paul de Musset told tales of her in *LUI ET ELLE*, the honest Philistine may feel it is small concern of his. But the ordinary private person who finds himself caricatured or traduced, has no such com-

pensation and no such means of retaliation or self-defence. And his risk is increasing as the mob of novelists multiplies. When every second woman and every third man one meets is a writer of novels, it is time that the remnant of us copyrighted our characters, and took measures to protect ourselves from unauthorised representation. It may happen to any man nowadays to wake up in the morning and find himself infamous. The young lady next door will copy his costume and mimic his manners, and then out of her own virgin imagination impute to him a "past," which throws no very pleasant light on the virgin imagination. Our young novelists have so comfortable a conviction of the importance of what they are pleased to call their "creations," that one may perhaps venture to hint that the boon of their psychology is no adequate compensation for their trespasses, without any risk of being classed for blood-guiltiness with the critic who killed Keats. And, in truth, so far as literature is concerned, few of our novelists are indispensable, even the youngest of them.

